

CHRISTIAN COURIER

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Mexican governor seeks peace for Chiapas ... p. 6

Viewing the Intafada up close p. 12



56th year of publication

Canadian churches help prevent AIDS in Africa

Alan Doerksen

BURLINGTON, Ont. — Although AIDS is a serious problem in North America, it is a major disaster in Africa, where millions of young people are dying of AIDS and many children are orphaned because of it. Several Canadian denominations have responded to Africa's AIDS pandemic by starting education and prevention programs there, in co-operation with sister agencies and churches in Africa.

30 million Africans with AIDS

According to CRWRC's Beth DeGraff, one out of every four South African women in their 20s is infected with HIV. By the end of 1999, 12.1 million African children were AIDS orphans, according to CRWRC. Worldwide, there

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Participants in an HIV/AIDS Training of Trainers workshop held in Kisumu, Kenya, last January by the Presbyterian Church in East Africa. These trainers will educate others in their communities about AIDS.

are 41.8 million people living with AIDS, and 29.9 million of them live in Africa.

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is working in partnership with local

African development agencies and community groups to educate people about AIDS in South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Senegal. CRWRC's goal in those countries is to educate communities and their leaders about AIDS and its prevention, while supporting those who live with or are affected by AIDS. CRWRC also incorporates AIDS education as part of its literacy, health and community development programs carried out with partner churches and agencies.

Most recently, CRWRC has formed a partnership with Michigan-based agencies Bethany Christian Services and International Aid to start a comprehensive AIDS response program to help care for people living with AIDS, and AIDS orphans in Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria. According to DeGraff, this program will

draw on the adoption placement expertise of Bethany Christian Services and the medical supply expertise of International Aid to facilitate the program.

New HIV-AIDS task force

CRWRC also recently started an HIV-AIDS task force, headed by Kenyan David Omanyoo, reports CRWRC's Matt VanGeest. "The impetus was our partners in East Africa identified this as a major issue for them," he explains. Two CRWRC staffers recently went to East Africa to meet with people there and develop plans and a budget for the task force. "The response will be integrated into CRWRC's strengths," explains VanGeest.

VanGeest has been helping out Wyva Hasselblad, a CRWRC

See CHURCHES page 2...

Top religion stories of the year 2000

Raising awareness of the church under the cross

(Compass Direct) — The growing awareness of worldwide Christian persecution can hardly be explained by the actions of a few people or the dramatic events in a specific country. So the following list of "top" stories for 2000 should be viewed only as a representative sample of significant news stories that have taken place this year. The list is also limited to areas where Compass Direct correspondents were able to provide in-depth coverage. Some of the stories come from isolated events. Others describe the ongoing oppression Christians often face. All help give us a glimpse of the difficult situations faced by the church around the world.

There are many other stories that deserve to be in this list but are not. Nevertheless, it is our hope that the following summaries and related timetables of events will serve as a reminder that vigilance and advocacy on behalf of the Persecuted Church are still desperately needed.

China: pressure on unregistered churches

China's Christians braced themselves for continued pressure in 2000 when word leaked from a January 10 Religious Affairs Bureau conference that the government wished to "strengthen control" of the two official churches by increasing the number of "political appointees" in the higher echelons of the Protestant Three Self Patriotic Association and the Catholic Patriotic Association. These leaked minutes from this conference caused a huge embarrassment to China's official church leaders who claim they are not political operatives imposed on the church, but Christians selected purely by the churches. The conference also called for more surveillance and control over unregistered religious activities. Throughout the year the government position seemed to be — in the words of a local policeman — "If you refuse to register, then that proves you are a cult."

The majority of China's Christians, who still prefer to worship in house churches, continued to endure government suspicion, if not outright hostility. In many places, house churches function as "half-open" churches, tolerated by authorities so long as they do not entertain foreign visitors or grow above 50 or 70 members.

On the other hand, persecution did not noticeably diminish. Compass carried an analysis of letters from China to FEBC radio which showed that all over the country Christians were subject to pressure, ranging from disruption of meetings by local cadres to fines, arrests and imprisonment. As usual, the greater number of arrests came from southern Henan, where on August 23, the largest mass round-up of Christians in recent years took place. One hundred and thirty leaders were arrested along with three American Bible teachers.

In terms of personalities, it was
See CHRISTIANS page 3...



Worshippers at the Mo-an Church in Shanghai, China.

News

Churches on cutting edge of AIDS education in East Africa

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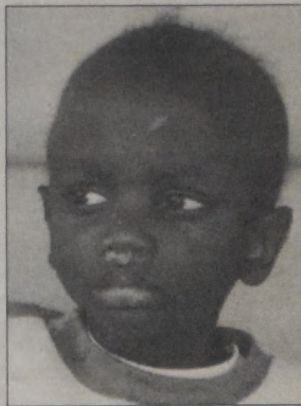
staffer in Senegal, to mentor an adolescent reproductive health program run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Senegal. This program allows young men and women aged 14 to 19 to meet in small groups to talk openly about issues such as sexuality and health. According to CRWRC's Kristen Deroo, the intent of this project is to develop the capacity of the participants to communicate and apply their new knowledge to making good decisions. This will reduce their risk of being infected by HIV, and also reduce the risk to their families and communities.

CRWRC also reaches young people by training local youth to be peer-educators, who work in teams of two, reports Deroo. Each pair facilitates a group of 20 participants for 32 twice-weekly sessions. These sessions are conducted in the local language and designed for those who cannot read. Peer educators use role-play, story-telling, open-ended drama, and video clips to stimulate discussion and decision-making within each group.

Training of trainers

Canadian Presbyterians are also partnering with churches in East Africa to help prevent AIDS, reports Jean-Frederic Beauchesne, the program co-ordinator for Africa and refugees for Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWSD). PWSD is helping out the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) with its HIV/AIDS Control Project in Kenya.

According to PWSD, about 15 per cent of adult Kenyans are infected with AIDS, and this rate is increasing by one per cent each year. But relative to the size of the problem, little is being done,



REUTERS/ANTONY NIUGUNA

Simon Peter Ngugi, age 3, has AIDS and attends a class at the Nyumbani Orphanage Home near Nairobi, Kenya.

contented PWSD. HIV/AIDS education is usually not found in Kenyan schools, and government programs exist in design but often lack necessary funding and implementation. Churches have not reached their potential due to continuing unease with the fact that most AIDS infections are acquired through sexual transmission.

But PCEA has been actively combatting AIDS. In 1998, it started the HIV/AIDS Control Project's Training of Trainers course, which has the strategy of training local community members at the congregational level about AIDS-related issues. Later on, these trainees will train Community AIDS Educators, who in turn will teach about AIDS at the community level, including in schools.

The Training of Trainers course has two phases: a two-and-a-half week training followed by a later one-week session. PCEA encourages a strong participatory approach, especially through small

group discussions. Here are some of the topics covered:

- The AIDS situation in Kenya;
- AIDS clinical facts;
- Theological perspective of AIDS;
- Human sexuality;
- Teaching/training techniques;
- AIDS counselling;
- Home care for people with AIDS;
- Planning AIDS programs and interventions.

Some long-term goals of this program are that after five years:

- The AIDS issue will be openly discussed in the church, and any talk of discrimination toward people living with AIDS will be discounted by the church establishment;
- An HIV/AIDS course will be taught in church-sponsored schools;
- The church will advocate the use of condoms for those who choose to have sex outside of marriage.

PCEA would like to see, after three years, that church congregations will have functioning health committees that will have AIDS prevention, and home-care (including the welfare and schooling of children) as a priority focus. PCEA already has a policy that all of its congregations should have health committees.

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Canadian minister helps develop program

Canadian Presbyterian minister Dr. Rick Allen is currently assigned to PCEA to help with its work of AIDS prevention, and is based at Kikuyu Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya.

"The AIDS/HIV control program receives CIDA-matched funds from PSWD," explains Beauchesne. "In January 2000, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend an AIDS/HIV Training of Trainers workshop in Kisumu, Kenya. Rick Allen ... has developed this workshop with the assistance of PCEA staff. The PCEA HIV/AIDS Committee has worked patiently to overcome the differing views of the Presbyterian community in Kenya. They are on the cutting edge of AIDS/HIV prevention."

Presbyterians in Canada are also partnering with sister churches in Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Malawi on AIDS-related projects. According to PWSD's website, Valleyview Presbyterian Church in Calgary recently raised funds for an AIDS awareness seminar held by the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. Paterson Presbyterian Church of Sarnia, Ont., recently contributed \$6,000 to the



REUTERS/JUDA NGWENYA

Florence, 35, lies in bed at her home in the South African township of Tembisa, east of Johannesburg.

Presbytery of Zimbabwe's AIDS Orphan Fund. These funds enabled the presbytery to assist orphaned children with school fees and uniforms.

Orphan Care project

In Malawi, PWSD is funding the Community-based Orphan Care project of that country's Presbyterian Church. Activities of this project include the training of community workers in community health and AIDS/HIV awareness; and conducting workshops on AIDS prevention for youth and children.

"Malawians have a tradition of caring for their orphans," writes Karen Plater, PWSD's resource and communications co-ordinator. Orphans who have lost parents to AIDS "move in with an extended family member — an aunt or uncle, grandparent or even older sibling. Due to the AIDS epidemic, the number of orphans has in-

creased phenomenally. Caregivers have found themselves looking after more children than they can manage. The pre-primary children are hardest-hit. Too young to go to school, they are often left alone during the day when their caregivers must go to work. Many are lucky if they have one meal a day."

The Community-based Orphan Care project now runs urban care centres which, explains Plater, "provide a safe learning environment for pre-primary children during the day. At the centre, they learn songs, colors, the alphabet, and other skills to help prepare them for school. They are fed two snacks and one hot meal a day."

The Anglican Church of Canada's Primate's World Relief and Development Fund supports several projects in Africa which address the AIDS crisis there. The fund helps out local dioceses to offer AIDS education programs.

(See related story on page 17)

Aids summit hears of progress against HIV

VATICAN CITY (ZENIT.org) — Participants of the AIDS conference held at the Vatican heard firsthand from Professor Guido Castelli Gattinara, a department head at the Child Jesus Hospital that it is possible to prevent the transmission of the HIV virus from mothers to children.


Gattinara explained that the cases of mother-to-child transmission are less than two per cent in his hospital in Rome. However, he emphasized that this is true only in Western countries. The situation continues to be grave in developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, he said.

"Even today, 1,700 children are born every day with the HIV virus," said Gattinara. "We have the knowledge to prevent the transmission of AIDS from mother to child; this is proven by a number of programs that we are implementing, precisely, in our hospital." His hospital is promoting these plans in Romania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sociologist Fiorenza Bagnato told Vatican Radio that Catholic churches have asked the international community for funds to ease access to pharmaceutical products in countries where people cannot afford these treatments, as in sub-Saharan Africa and in some Asian countries.

Amsterdam 2000



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News

Christians face violent opposition in Colombia, Egypt

... continued from page 1

a better year. Well-known house church pastors Alan Yuan and Samuel Lamb were largely left alone. In May, Xu Yongze was released on time after serving a three-year sentence. Another high profile prisoner, David Zhang (Zhang Rongliang), sentenced in December 1999 to three years hard labor, was released early. Li Dexian, a house church teacher from Guangdong province, was continually arrested and released to prevent him speaking at a Tuesday night venue that had been demolished by police.

China 2000

January 10: Government issues new directives to control religion.

May 16: House church pastor Xu Yongze released after three years in labor camp.

August 23: 120 Christians detained in southern Henan province.

September 26: Government issues rules governing religious activities of foreigners.

Colombia: the war that never ends

The suffering of Colombia's Christians was unrelenting in 2000. Caught in the middle of the ongoing warfare between guerrilla factions, drug cartels, para-military groups and the government's army, Christian leaders were especially targeted as the battle for control of people and land resulted in dozens of deaths and thousands of refugees. The on-again-off-again nature of so-called "peace" talks dashed the already minimal hopes for ending the conflict.

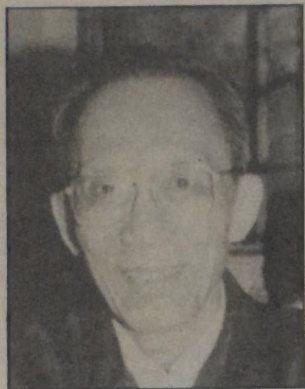
An estimated 100,000 civilians have died during the past 10 years as a result of Colombia's civil war. It continues to claim about 30,000 lives a year. Between one and two million people have been displaced by the violence since 1995, more than 500,000 since 1998 alone. Approximately 10 per cent are Christians. Most are now living in extreme poverty.

Colombian church sources estimate, and many would call it conservative, that 300 churches have been closed and more than 50 pastors and Christian leaders have been assassinated since 1998. Kidnapping has become a commercial enterprise, with more than 17,500 cases reported in the last decade. In reality, the number of kidnab victims may be closer to 70,000.

Colombia 2000

January 23: Two Pentecostal pastors murdered by guerrillas for "assisting" the army.

April 24: Regional youth leader kidnapped and slain in Uraba.



Chinese house church pastor Samuel Lamb.

May 24: Australian missionary released after being held captive by guerrillas for two weeks.

September 2: Kidnapped pastor released near Medellin for \$2,500 ransom.

November 24: Guerrilla commanders deny that they target evangelical pastors.

Egypt: no justice after El-kosheh violence

The outbreak of Egypt's worst sectarian violence in 20 years in El-Kosheh village in Upper Egypt's Sohag governate on the eve of the year 2000 challenged the safety and morale of the country's entire Christian community. In a three-day rampage unchecked by local security officials, 21 Christian villagers were murdered and 260 of their homes and businesses destroyed. Government promises to identify and prosecute the guilty turned sour quickly.

Fabricated criminal charges were pressed against Father Gabriel, a village priest, followed by the surprise jailing of 38 Coptic Christians, indicted along with 98 Muslim suspects for the violence. Verdicts from the first trial concluded in September gave a mere "slap on the wrist" to 39 Muslim defendants, with 18 released, another 17 given six month to two-year jail terms, and weighty 10-year sentences reserved for the four defendants still not in custody. A second trial including the murder suspects and all the Coptic defendants was set to begin December 2.

With deliberate timing, Sohag governate courts have meanwhile handed down harsh verdicts against two individual Christians from El-Kosheh. Shaiboub Aarsal was sentenced in June to 15 years at hard labor in a controversial double-murder case dating back to August 1998, when local police were accused of abusing hundreds of villagers in order to pin the

murders on a Christian suspect. In a separate case, Sourial Isshak was found guilty of insulting Islam on the streets of El-Kosheh and sentenced in July to three years in prison. Both cases remain under appeal.

Egypt 2000

Dec. 31- Jan. 2: Muslim mobs rampage through El-Kosheh and surrounding villages.

January 4: Mass funeral held for Coptic victims.

January 27: President Mubarak blames "subversive foreign elements" for the violence.

February 7: Criminal charges filed against Father Gabriel.

March 11: Chief prosecutor indicts 98 Muslims and 38 Copts for violence.

March 13: 24 Muslim suspects released for "lack of evidence."

June 5: Christian Shaiboub Aarsal sentenced to 15 years in prison.

July 16: Sourial Isshak given three-year term for "insulting Islam."

September 5: First El-Kosheh verdict issues minimal sentences.

Indonesia: massacres in the Malukus

Gory headlines of the deadly Muslim-Christian carnage in the islands that make up the provinces of northern and southern Maluku dominated the international perception of Indonesia in 2000. However, in more populous regions such as Java, the church enjoyed greater freedoms as the country groped uncertainly towards a more stable democratic system. Dr. Iman Santoso, director of LINK — a national prayer network — stressed that Christians in most areas in the post-Suharto era were freer to evangelize, build churches and distribute literature. Since the majority of Indonesia's 15-25 million Christians live in such areas, this benefit must not be undervalued.

But concerns rightly centered on Maluku where roughly two million people live, half of them Christian, half of them Muslim. A grizzly civil war, waged with machetes and bows and arrows since January 1999, has resulted in 100,000 Muslim refugees fleeing the conflict. This changed dramatically for the worse in April with the arrival of a 3,000-strong Muslim jihad force armed with rifles and artillery. That such a large group could slip through the naval blockade defied belief, and local Christians feared army connivance.

These jihad warriors quickly set about their task, striking first the

Christian village of Duma in Halmahera Island, killing more than 200 people with unspeakable brutality. A declaration of civil emergency in Maluku on June 26 by President Wahid seemed powerless to stop the carnage, and for the first time, Christians began to leave the islands by the thousands.

Statistics released in November by a local watchdog group, the FKKI, claimed the total number of refugees from the conflict came to 187,244, and the death toll was 3,931. Church leaders refused to meet Indonesian President Wahid on September 2 because he could not bring rogue army elements under control.

Peace talks are underway, but the killings continue and are spreading to other areas of Indonesia. Separatism fueled by religious intolerance is the greatest threat to the future of this sprawling, fledgling democracy. At the moment, the forces of toleration are just tipping the balance, but if more fighting breaks out in other regions, the nation could easily become a gigantic Maluku.

Indonesia 2000

January 17: Churches are burned as violence erupts on Lombok island.

April: A force of 3,000 Muslim fighters arrives in the Malukus.

June 19-20: More than 200 Christians massacred in Duma on Halmahera island.

June 26: President Wahid declares a state of civil emergency in Maluku province.

September 17: Pastor in Medan, Sumatra, attacked for the third time.

November 15: Muslim extremist leader announced a "Let's Snuff Out all the Candles in December" campaign, vowing to stamp out Christianity on the island of Halmahera in northern Maluku.

Nigeria: Islamic law in the north

The campaign by several northern Nigerian states to implement Islamic law has brought new Muslim-Christian conflicts to a country already plagued by religious, ethnic, economic and political problems. The population is evenly divided between Christians and Muslims, but the desire for Islamic law in the north threatens to forever dash any hope of national unity.

In February and May, religious clashes resulted in the death of several hundred Christians and Muslims in Kaduna state. Twenty Christian pastors were among those who died. Other incidents too numerous to mention have

brought increased friction to all sides and threaten to spin the country out of control.

Nigeria 2000

February 21-24: Hundreds die in religious clash over Islamic law in Kaduna.

March 1: President Obasanjo, a Christian, calls for national reconciliation.

May 23-24: Muslims and Christians clash again in Kaduna.

June 22: Kano becomes the fourth state to propose Islamic law.

July 7: Vice-President Abubakar, a Muslim, voices supports for Islamic law.

September 7-9: 25 killed during religious riot in Gombe state.

Tajikistan: church bombed

The deliberate bombing of the largest Protestant church in Dushanbe killed nine Christians and wounded 70 more during a Sunday worship service in October. Although Tajik authorities condemned the attack against the Korean-led Grace Sonmin Church and extended compensation to families of the victims, at least 12 local church leaders were detained and subjected to heavy-handed interrogations, some for an extended period.

Three weeks later, the Tajik government labeled the bombing an act of "religious fanaticism" and charged three suspects from a local Islamic institute with the crime. With its three-story complex left in shambles, the church is working rapidly to complete the construction of a new Mission Center before winter snows fall.

During the past year, the church had been subjected to several anonymous threats of violence, as well as arrests of some of its members. The government warned that the church's registration status could be revoked for "illegal missionary propaganda." For the past decade, the traditional Muslim republic has allowed more freedom for Christians than most of its Central Asian neighbors.

Tajikistan 2000

October 1: Two bombs explode and 12 local church leaders detained for questioning.

October 22: First of 3 severely injured patients flown to Korea.

October 22: Interior Minister announces arrest of three Islamist suspects.

October 31: Last detained church leader released.

Editorial

'Maranatha!' their blood cries out

Harry der Nederlanden

Over the past year(s) CC has carried story after story about the hardships and sufferings of the persecuted church around the world. Our front page story, provided by Compass Direct, a news service devoted to reporting on the persecuted church, documents some of the major stories that we've been following the past year(s). Sometimes we also use information provided by Keston. Keston is a more aggressive organization, actively seeking out what is happening to believers in different areas of the world, probing and questioning, making the persecutors aware that they are being watched, that their deeds are being made public. In our Nov. 27 issue we summarized the report written by Paul Marshall for Freedom House, another agency devoted to keeping the plight of the persecuted in the public eye, not just of fellow believers but of those in the West who claim to love freedom.

Not light reading

This does not make for light reading. To read about fellow Christians slaughtered in Indonesia or driven from their homes and their land puts a knot in your stomach. A shadow falls across your own privileged existence. You read about Chinese pastors who are constantly harassed by the authorities, thrown into prison, beaten, tortured – but

who continue to be faithful shepherds. To read such stories month after month fills you with frustration, futility. You look for something upbeat and humorous to cheer you up and dispel the horrific images from your mind. Why should you continue to read about such gruesomeness and cruelty when you can do nothing about it? What do such distant events in countries we don't begin to understand have to do with us?

Evil still has sharp teeth and bloody nails

If you want to read about misery, crime, violence and fighting, you can get a big enough dose of it from your daily newspaper or your TV. Why should you turn to CC for more images telling you that the world can be an awful, terrifying place, that evil still has sharp teeth and bloody nails?

Christmas is just behind us. We've taken the opportunity to reflect on the election of Mary, and how she gave voice to all the longings of her people, all their cries of anguish and of hope. We followed the family of Jesus as they fled to Egypt, retracing the long trail of tears of the Exodus.

Now, look up. In the sky, see – a woman clothed with the sun, and under her feet, the moon. On her head, a crown of twelve stars. She is pregnant and cries out in pain, for she is in labor. She is going to have a baby.

The sky begins to darken and churn ominously. An enormous dragon, red as blood, covers the entire expanse of sky, sweeping down the stars with his tail as with a scythe. He positions himself so he can devour the child as soon as it is born, but we see the child snatched from his waiting jaws and the mother flee into the desert. And then the heavens are filled with battle scenes between regiments of angels.

In the middle of Revelation

We are, of course, in the middle of the book of Revelation. Catholic theologians have interpreted the figure of the woman with the crown of stars to be Mary, the mother of Jesus. Her flight into the desert, then, alludes to the flight into Egypt. This is not altogether wrong, says J.H. Bavinck in his book on Revelation, as long as we don't forget that Mary also represents the church of all ages, or to put it in other words, all those who have despaired of being saved by the great and the powerful and who cry out between despair and hope for God to bring a Savior.

There is no more vivid image to awaken the church from its mainstream slumbers than this one. When we begin to think that we, the church of Christ, have won a respected place in our society among the wealthy, the learned and the powerful, this scene from Revelation reminds us that we are being stalked. The church is the persecuted church. What is happening to Christians in Indonesia, China, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Vietnam and numerous other countries is not happening to others. It is happening to the body of Christ; it is happening to us.

This is why it is so important for us to remain in touch with our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world – so that we do not forget who we are. It reminds us that the word for "witnesses" in the New Testament has the same root as the word "martyr". The church comes to know its

Lord not just in moments of triumph, not just when it is able to place its man in Ottawa or Washington, but when it participates in his suffering. That's not an easy thing for us to learn and to remember. We need to be reminded of it again and again. That's why before he left, Jesus gave us the remembrance of the Lord's Supper.

Vision in the sky

Of late, many of us, myself included, have talked of the triumphalism of those immigrants who dreamed of the transformation of education, politics, labor unions, the arts and media, and every other institution by the power of the Word and the Spirit. We forget that the dreamers were often handfuls of believers who fit into the living room of an immigrant's two bedroom house. They dreamed not on the basis of immediate prospects and possibilities, not because they had the contacts and the bank accounts, but because they saw this vision in the sky. And they saw the great dragon hurled down; they saw his head crushed by the seed of the woman. And, with the visionary John, they heard the loud voice say:

*"Now have come the salvation
and the power
and the kingdom of our God,
and the authority of his Christ.
For the accuser of our brothers,
who accuses them before our God
day and night
has been hurled down.
They overcame him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony;
they did not love their lives so much
as to shrink from death.
Therefore rejoice, you heavens
and you who dwell in them!
But woe to the earth and the sea,
because the devil has gone down to you!
He is filled with fury,
because he knows that his time is short."
(Rev. 12:10 - 12.)*

To witness to the ultimate triumph of the Lamb over the dragon is not to be a triumphalist if one does so as one prepared to suffer with Christ. And those who long for the new heaven and the new earth and who seek to live by that reality do suffer. We do not all suffer the same way, to be sure. We are not all subject to imprisonment and torture for our faith, nor should we wish it. With the martyrs around the world we cry for justice, for the coming of the New Jerusalem, prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband. Yes, the dragon stalks the woman, but at the same time, she is clothed with the sun and wears a crown of twelve stars, for she is the bride of Christ. Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus.

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EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF

Associate Editor: Harry der Nederlanden ccdernd@aol.com;
Reporter, Layout: Alan Doerksen ccjournal@aol.com;
Circulation Manager: Grace Bowman ccsubscription@aol.com;
Accounts Manager: Natasha Postuma ccadpromo@aol.com

REGIONAL REPORTERS

Jeff Hoogendoorn, Victoria; Jacky Huberts, Langley, B.C.;
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4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON, L2W 1A1
Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838
Fax: (905) 682-8313;
E-mail: cceditor@aol.com

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Letter/News

Bolt: Jubilee movement links economic strategy too closely to Gospel

I have been reluctant to re-enter the fray about Jubilee 2000 and its theological as well as economic principles. I really have no interest in an extended debate about socialism in particular because in his November 27 response and in his earlier (August 21) response to Harry Antonides, Jonathan Chaplin virtually concedes the points of critique that Harry and I raised.

Eager fellow-travelers with totalitarians

Specifically, on the economic point he grants that "some of the anti-capitalist rhetoric within CEJI documents is over-played and counterproductive." Well, that is indeed more gentle than my way of putting it and we could quarrel about the word "some" but at least he admits the bias. This is confirmed by his contention (against Harry Antonides) that it is not "theological liberalism" that is at work in the theological documents of CEJI but "liberation theology." He's right about that but then fails to point out that the liberationist analysis is self-admittedly Marxist and socialist (see e.g. Jose Miguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*). Now it was not my point to accuse supporters of Jubilee 2000 of having the bloody intentions of Stalin, Castro and company but to remind CC readers that Christian clergy and churches in the 20th century have been

eager fellow-travelers with socialist totalitarian regimes in the name of social justice. And liberation theology does, as Harry Antonides claimed, change the focus of the Gospel to socio-political relief from unjust structures. To say, as Chaplin does, that because both are committed to social justice, Reformed theology and liberation theology have much in common is terribly simplistic.

And then Chaplin also indicates his discomfort with the eco-theology and liberationist elements in the CEJI documents. I am really glad about that but my question is why earlier reports on the Jubilee Initiative expressed not a hint of discomfort about what I judge to be a serious capitulation to paganism. The rhetoric in the June 12 issue of CC was all laudatory and positive. Recall the phrases: "Jubilee is about deep faith, about good news"; "they are taking seriously the word of God"; Jubilee is in "the Reformed tradition of transforming culture"; Jubilee "can help the church rethink its kingdom theology"; "the point of biblical theology is to participate in God's renewal of the world" which "is already penetrating our public life."

I stand by my main points: the supporting documents for the Jubilee 2000 initiative are seriously flawed, both theologically and economically. I don't accuse anyone who favors unilateral debt forgiveness of either

theological or economic error. What I do protest however is having a highly debatable economic and political strategy so closely linked to the Gospel and the church that it achieves the status of a confession of faith. That is why the church has no business

making specific policy announcements in that arena. It is simply not the institutional church's task.

John Bolt,
Calvin Seminary
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Christian stockholders pressure AT&T

(Religion Today) — Christian stockholders are pressuring AT&T to get out of the pornography business. Eight investment groups filed a resolution this week ordering the telecommunications giant to review its involvement in the pornography industry and report back to them by May.

They want an assessment of potential financial, legal, and public relations harm from AT&T's partnership with the Hot Network, which distributes pornography to cable television franchises, according to *The Register*, an English newspaper. The investors want to know whether AT&T risks violating obscenity laws or colluding with organized crime.

The protesters control 1.6 million shares of AT&T, "a big enough chunk of Ma Cable to be taken quite seriously by the board," the newspaper reported. They are led by

Mennonite Mutual Aid, which controls MMA Praxis Mutual Funds, and also includes an agency of the United Methodist Church, Christian Brothers Investment Services, The Sisters of Saint Joseph, the Benedictine Sisters, a Church of the Brethren group, Catholic Health East, and an agency of the Reformed Church in America.

The smut is getting worse, the investors say. AT&T "has recently expanded the availability and level of graphic, sexually explicit content on its digital cable system through an agreement with Hot Network," the protesters told the *Register*. "The very nature of pornography demands a constant escalation of explicit content," so that the current fare "can be presumed to be the first of even more graphic offerings to follow," they said.

More hunger accompanies U.S. prosperity

(Religion Today) — The poor need more food and emergency shelter. Requests for emergency shelter increased 15 percent in 1999, the highest jump since 1990, according to a survey of 25 cities released by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The demand for hunger assistance increased 17 per cent, about the same as the previous year.

The needs keep increasing despite the nation's overall economic growth, Peter Clavelle, mayor of Burlington, Vt., and head of the group's hunger and homeless

committee, told *USA Today*. "The economists tell us that we're living in an era of unprecedented prosperity, yet the food banks and homeless shelters tell us that the lines are getting longer."

The report blames low-paying jobs, insufficient affordable housing, and cuts in public assistance, drug-treatment funds, and programs for the mentally ill. Sadly, a growing number of people who ask for help are families, children, and working people, Clavelle said.

Christian writers take note:

Entries are now being accepted for the 10th annual God Uses Ink awards contest, which draws attention to the best writing of Canadian authors who are Christian. The deadline to enter any work published in 2000 is Feb. 7, 2001.

Winners of the national contest, sponsored by *Faith Today* magazine, receive a cash prize of \$250 for books and \$150 for shorter works. This year's specialty category is open to humor articles from 1998-2000.

Last year's winners include Harold Jantz's essay "Welcoming yet not affirming" (in the Mennonite Brethren Herald); Gerald Bensen's history of the Canadian Bible Society, *To the Ends of the Earth* (CBS); and six other works, plus 10 honorable mentions. A full list of past winners is available on request; it has also been posted at the web site www.efc-canada.com since Dec. 1.

As usual, the contest is open to works published anywhere in the world, as long as the author is a Christian with Canadian citizenship. The contest does not accept material published exclusively on the Internet, but intends to open a special category for such writing soon.

Publishers are invited to submit materials on behalf of their writers and pay the \$25 book or \$15 article entry fee as a gift to them or can encourage their writers to submit work to the contest.

Winners will be announced June 15, 2001. All authors will receive two brief critiques for each entry from independent judges. The awards ceremony is held as part of a three-day conference for writers in Guelph, Ontario.

A contest entry form that you can print out is now available on the Internet at <http://www.efc-canada.com/entryf.htm>. For rules and other information visit <http://www.efc-canada.com> and follow the links. Or write to:

GUI Awards Contest

c/o Faith Today, M.I.P. Box 3745, Markham, ON, L3R 0Y4 Canada

fax: (905) 479-4742

James Calvin Schaap will be keynote speaker at the God Uses Ink conference. He currently serves as a professor at Dordt College, Iowa, a job that has allowed him to publish at least four novels, three books of stories, three biographies, four books of meditations and a collection of essays. You can read more about him and his books at <http://www.dordt.edu/dept/english/schaap.html>. His fiction often treats family conflicts in small towns with irony and humor. He knows Canada well. He says he sometimes struggles to find a publisher because the Christian publishers say he's too Christian. Those kinds of experiences should make him a stimulating speaker for the God Uses Ink conference.

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News

Mexican governor seeks to bring peace to Chiapas

Dan Wooding

CHIAPAS, Mexico — Pablo Salazar, the man who once saved the life of an Indian pastor who was sentenced to be hung by an angry lynch mob, has been elected as governor of Chiapas and, along with new Mexican leader Vicente Fox, will try to bring peace to this troubled province.

Dr. Dale Kietzman, founder and president of Latin American Indian Ministries (L.A.I.M.), said in an interview, "Pablo Salazar has a well deserved reputation with the Indians of Chiapas. They trust him, and this will be very important as he now has the possibility of bringing some order out of the chaos of that situation."

"Pablo is a dedicated believer, an active participant in the Nazarene church in Tuxtla Gutierrez. Many of his friends were confused when he joined the PAN, because it has close ties to the Catholic Church. But Pablo had already resigned from the PRI (he was the senator from Chiapas under the PRI at the time) and many political groups came to him, asking him to run for governor, including the PAN. He decided he would represent all of these groups, and the coalition was headed by the PAN simply because it was the largest opposition party."

Dr. Kietzman added, "Pablo is almost a politician by accident. As an attorney, he had helped straighten out the affairs of an athletic club in Tuxtla. That brought him to public attention and he was asked to take on other tasks, in and out of government, usually for short periods of trouble or change. So he knows how to tackle difficult situations."

The pastor who was saved

The pastor whose life he saved, Manuel Arias, a Tzotzil Indian,



DAN WOODING

Pablo Salazar (left), the newly-elected governor of Chiapas, with a pastor whose life he saved, Manuel Arias, a Tzotzil Indian.

had been arrested by a lynch mob of supporters of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, known by the Spanish acronym EZLN, who have for more than six years been conducting an armed struggle against the Mexican government. His detention took place shortly after the massacre of 45 Indians on December 22, 1997 in the town of Acteal in the Chenalho area of Chiapas.

First evangelical ever in Mexican Congress

His life was spared only after the intervention of then Chiapas senator, Pablo Salazar, the first evangelical ever to be voted into the Mexican Congress since the revolution took place against Spain more than 172 years ago.

I first met Pablo Salazar during an emotional reunion that took place at a special "unity" conference organized and held in the city of Tuxtla Gutierrez, the capital of the southern Mexico state, by Latin American Indian Ministries

of Orange, California.

In an exclusive interview, Pastor Arias, whose evangelical church is located close to Acteal, said, "I was arrested because I was falsely accused of transporting weapons for the paramilitary groups who are opposing the Zapatistas. They had seen me helping the [Christian Indian] brothers and many times I had asked the president of the municipality to help me with transportation when I had food for the refugees."

"I think the real reason for my arrest was because they were angry with me because I had told my brethren not to get involved in any of the conflicts or fights because that's not what the Bible says. But they said that I had been involved in the conflicts, but I have not. Perhaps I was a barrier for the Zapatistas [who wanted support from his congregation] and that is why they arrested me."

'I saw the ropes being prepared'

"When I was detained in a town in the municipality of Chenalho, I saw that they were preparing the ropes to hang me because they thought if they killed me they would have the open space to bring all the other Christians into the fight. My little brother was there and saw what was happening and he discovered that brother Pablo Salazar was in the area. He ran to him and told him what was happening, and thanks to him I was liberated, and thanks to God I am here and free."

Salazar then took up the story,



"When I heard what was happening to Manuel, I told the Zapatistas and other groups there, 'I know Manuel. He is a pastor, a man of peace. He is a good man, a preacher of the Word.' I also said that I knew that he has never taken a weapon and he has never trained or helped anyone to be involved in conflict. I then demanded they liberate Manuel because he was unfairly detained."

"I told the Zapatistas, 'Unless you liberate Manuel, I will denounce what is going on here in a national way through the media.' I believe that it was not because I was a senator, that I should help him, but because I knew Manuel, and because I am a believer in Jesus Christ. Thank God, they did free him and he was not hung."

'Thank you for this freedom'

Fighting back the tears, Manuel Arias then said, "What can I say? When I was liberated, I said to God, 'Thank you for this freedom and thank you for Brother Pablo Salazar, because it is because of him that I am a free man and my life has been spared.'"

Then, turning to the then senator, he added, "I have known him for years and I know he has been chosen by God for the position of senator so he can represent God and the church here in Chiapas and also so he can help the Indian people."

Pablo Salazar was later to address the conference and standing at his side as his Indian interpreter was none other than the pastor whose life he has helped to save.

Order out of chaos in Chiapas

Dr. Kietzman said, "We feel our role with L.A.I.M. in this situation in Chiapas is to offer support to believers who are fearing for their lives in this region torn by political and religious strife."

"On the one hand you have the long-running military conflict between the Zapatista revolution and the government. Add to that the struggle between the growing evangelical Christian populace, which some say is now as high as 40 per cent, and the traditionalists or Christo-pagan Catholics who mix their old pagan practices with the Roman Catholic faith. They have run evangelical Christians off their farmlands and from their tribal communities, burning houses and killing men, women and children because of their refusal to continue in a pagan lifestyle. This has been going on for 32 years, unchecked by the authorities."

"Then, of course, there is the fact that Chiapas is the poorest state in Mexico. When you mix all this together, you truly see a hurting people. This grieves the heart of God."

The Zapatistas launched an uprising in January 1994 that claimed at least 145 lives during two weeks of fighting. Their subsequent peace talks with the government broke down in September 1996 and have been followed by a tense cease-fire.

Possible breakthrough

The *Los Angeles Times* recently reported that, in a possible breakthrough in one of Mexico's most intractable political problems, the leader of the 1994 Zapatista rebellion has agreed to resume peace talks stalled for four years — but only if the government of new President Vicente Fox makes concessions first.

Subcommander Marcos, leader of the mostly Maya rebels in Chiapas, demanded that the government evacuate seven army bases in the southern state, pass an Indian rights bill and release all Zapatista "political prisoners" as a sign of goodwill.

"Mr. Fox, if you choose the way of respectful, serious and sincere dialogue, show your willingness with deeds," Marcos, wearing his trademark black ski mask, said during his first public appearance in more than a year.

"You can be sure you will have a positive response from the Zapatistas. And this way you can resume the dialogue and soon begin to build a true peace," the rebel leader told about 250 journalists summoned to a jungle clearing north of the Guatemalan border for a late-afternoon news conference.

Marcos' appearance was the most dramatic sign so far of the changes that could occur after Fox's inauguration, which ended the reign of the world's longest-ruling party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party.

With the help of Pablo Salazar, Vicente Fox has the best hope for peace for many years in Chiapas.

Dan Wooding is an award winning British journalist now living in Southern California with his wife Norma. He is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in

Strategic Times). Wooding is also a syndicated columnist, and was for ten years a commentator on the UPI Radio Network in Washington, DC.



Palestinians use Christian village as sniper base

(Religion Today) — A Christian village near Jerusalem is being used as a staging ground for attacks on the city's residents, the publisher of the *Jerusalem Post* says. Palestinian guerrillas come nightly to Beit Jalla, a Christian Arab village on the outskirts of Jerusalem, to attack the nearby suburb of Gilo, wrote Tom Rose in *The Weekly Standard*.

The guerrillas commandeer their way into homes, many of them owned by Christian families, and fire thousands of bullets into the homes and apartment houses

of Jews in Gilo, Rose said. The Israeli army uses sharpshooters to counter the attacks but the results are inconclusive and the nightly conflicts end when the guerrillas run out of bullets, he said.

The Palestinians are attempting to goad the Israelis into a full-scale attack on the village, which they believe will result in condemnation of Israel by Christians worldwide, Rose said. Christians should call on Prime Minister Barak to secure the village with blockades, preventing Palestinian gunmen from their nightly attacks, he said.

News

Was it to forestall arson? Or a fund-raiser by the parson?

Mark Tooley

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — Was the great church arson story of 1996 largely a scheme to prevent the financial collapse of the National Council of Churches (NCC)? There is evidence pointing in that direction.

In 1996, the NCC persuaded the media that black churches were burning all across the South, the apparent victims of a nationwide upsurge in racial hatred. The NCC's Burned Churches Fund collected millions of dollars ostensibly for church reconstruction. We now know there never was any firm evidence of a black church arson epidemic and no evidence of a racist conspiracy aimed at black churches.

And now we also know that a significant chunk of the millions of dollars raised for church reconstruction never actually went for bricks and mortar.

At the time of the church arson story's debut, the insurance industry estimated that 490 churches typically burn in an average year. Since an estimated 20 per cent of all churches are predominantly black, it would be expected that

close to 100 black churches would burn annually. Nobody then, or ever since, has documented that anywhere near 100 black churches have burned in any single year.

This discrepancy did not deter the NCC, which raised over \$9.1 million in cash, along with nearly \$3.4 million more in in-kind assistance. But of the \$9.1 million, only \$6.4 million can be accounted for in grants for church construction. The NCC has not explained what happened to the remaining \$2.7 million in cash.

Burned Churches Fund shut down

Last year, when the Burned Churches Fund was shut down, the NCC's own auditor questioned the NCC's transfer of the fund's remaining \$330,000 to the NCC's general administration. The NCC has been wracked by deficit spending for years. In 1997 the NCC suffered a \$1.6 million deficit and in 1998 it endured a \$1.5 million loss.

Last year, when the Burned Churches Fund's fund-raising had virtually come to a halt, the NCC fell short nearly \$4 million, precipitating a major crisis and reorgani-

zation for America's oldest and largest ecumenical organization. In just a few years, NCC's reserves of \$15 million have been spent down to a now untouchable \$3 million in designated funds.

The NCC had originally claimed that 15 per cent of the Burned Churches Fund would go towards administration and programs to combat the "root causes" of racism. This provision set off fears by conservative critics of the NCC that church reconstruction money would fund left-wing political activities. Some did. But in the end, most of the re-routed money seems to have gone towards a far more banal activity: propping up the NCC's failing administrative infrastructure.

Counting in-kind assistance, mostly construction materials, the fund raised about \$12.5 million, 15 per cent of which would be \$1.9 million. Of course, 15 per cent of the \$9.1 million raised in cash would only be \$1.36 million. This contrasts with the \$2.6 million that appears to have been spent on non-construction purposes, which is about 28 per cent of the cash raised for burned churches

by the NCC.

Last year, NCC General Secretary Joan Brown Campbell, who had been the Burned Churches Fund's chief cheerleader, retired under a cloud of growing deficits and financial upheaval for the NCC. The NCC's largest member, the United Methodist Church, even briefly cut off its funding in an effort to compel the NCC to repair its tattered finances and conduct better bookkeeping. Over the last year, several of the largest member denominations have been asked to help with the NCC's multimillion dollar bailout.

Trying to repair damage

Still trying to repair the damage, NCC General Secretary Bob Edgar is now cutting 17 positions from its staff of 64. And he has proposed dissolving the NCC in favor of a larger ecumenical umbrella that would include Evangelicals and Roman Catholics.

Some NCC insiders have privately raised the possibility that the NCC will collapse in the next year or two. That collapse may have happened several years ago absent the intervention of the Burned Churches Fund.

Although money from the Burned Churches Fund not spent on church construction was to have been spent on both administration and anti-racism programs, the former appears to have received the bulk of the money. The NCC had promised a series of anti-racism conferences around the country. In

fact, only a few were held, drawing small crowds.

The NCC has refused to conduct an audit of the Burned Churches Fund. A final budget report on the fund was given to the NCC's General Assembly last year, but it accounted only for \$6.4 million in grants for church reconstruction. It made no mention of the \$3.4 million of in-kind gifts, nor of the \$2.6 million apparently spent on overhead and political action.

Meanwhile, the NCC's often incendiary claims about black church arsons continue to be undermined by more responsible documentation. In its annual report for the year 2000, the National Church Arson Task Force found that most churches suffering arson are white, not black. And only 10 per cent or fewer of persons arrested for arson have shown enough evidence of racial motivation to merit prosecution for hate crimes.

But few people are examining the validity of the great church arson story's original exaggerated claims. The only consolation for those who believe in accurate history is this: The success of the Burned Churches Fund merely postponed what is probably inevitable — the complete or near-collapse of the NCC.

Mark Tooley is president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy. He wrote this article for the Washington Times. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Calvin Institute of Worship distributes \$60,000 in grants

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (Calvin College) — Congregations from a wide variety of denominations and cultures across North America will benefit from a new \$1.2 million grant awarded to Calvin College by Lilly Endowment Inc.

The grant will allow Calvin's Institute of Christian Worship to award over \$1 million to congregations across North America as part of its "Worship Renewal Grants Program" over the next two years. The Institute will also host each grant recipient on Calvin's campus to share insights about worship renewal and to work collaboratively with other congregations.

"This news is very gratifying," says Institute director John Witvliet, "not only for Calvin, but especially for the congregations all over North America who will benefit from this program. This year we will be able to provide resources for creative and thoughtful congregational leaders who will work out ways to improve and revitalize worship. The work they do will inspire other churches. It's a very exciting project to be part of."

In 1998, Calvin was awarded a previous grant from Lilly Endowment for \$1.3 million, of

which \$500,000 was designated for the Worship Renewal Grants Program. The initial grant allowed the Institute of Christian Worship to give 12 sub-grants last year totaling almost \$150,000.

With the new Lilly grant, Calvin can effectively quadruple the size of its Worship Renewal Grants Program. Instead of giving 12 grants this year, Calvin is awarding almost 50, most between \$5,000 and \$15,000, totaling over \$600,000. It will do the same in 2001.

The new grants will go to congregations in both Canada and the United States, stretching from Vancouver, B.C., to Tampa, Florida, and from San Diego, Ca., to Boston, Mass. Those congregations represent a dozen denominations, including African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American and multi-ethnic churches.

The grants will fund worship conferences in Arizona, California and South Carolina, extended worship courses in California and Florida, worship leader training sessions in South Dakota and Manitoba, the composition of new worship music in British Columbia and Virginia, child and youth worship programs in California and

Ohio, and church architecture projects in Pennsylvania and Illinois.

Institute Program Manager Cindy Holtrop says Calvin had expected to receive 50-60 grant applications last year for 12 grants. Instead it received over 260 from some 30 states and provinces and 20 different denominations.

"It was very difficult to say 'no' to so many fine proposals," says Holtrop. "Now we are grateful to be able to say 'yes' much more often!"

"We were very pleasantly surprised by this positive response," Witvliet says. "It confirms that there are many people eager to do some creative and reflective work on worship. It also tells us that there are many congregations quite stressed about worship-related issues ... looking for guidance."

Guidance is one of the ways the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship tries to help churches to which it has given grants, but also other churches around the world who are struggling with worship. The Institute office fields questions and inquiries from dozens of congregations each month, and posts a variety of resources on the web at www.calvin.edu/worship.

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Church

Trustees discuss changing identity of Christian Reformed Church

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (CRC News Release) — The Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America meeting in Grand Rapids Dec. 7-9, 2000 spent some time reflecting on the changing character of the church in Canada. They reflected on the loss of the "ethnic glue" that has in the past contributed to the cohesion of the church and worried about the weakening of its Reformed worldview.

This was the second meeting for the expanded board, which has equal numbers of Canadian and U.S. trustees.

Just the facts

The trustees viewed a presentation of facts about CRC congregations gleaned from Faith Communities Today (FACT), the largest survey ever undertaken of faith communities and their congregations in North America. Dirk Hart of Christian Reformed Home Missions, who participated in the study on behalf of the CRC, said he was surprised at the degree of difference it uncovered between congregations in Canada and those in the U.S. Canadians have the reputation of being more active,

involved and generous, he said, but in some cases the study found that to be a myth. He also said that Canada is "far and away the more secular of the two countries. There's a rapid decline in the spiritual life of church members and in religious interest," which is even more pronounced as you go from East to West. Over all, he said, the survey revealed that indigenous North American churches are growing, while denominations that originated in Europe are declining. He attributed this to erosion of their "ethnic glue."

The board debated the denomination's performance in planting new churches across North America. Several trustees expressed concern that some new congregations have lost the sense of what it means to be Reformed. "How do we plant churches that lead rather than just churches that will be filled?" asked Rev. Edward Den Haan, the trustee from Classis Huron. Rev. Duane Kelderman, a trustee from Region 11, said the CRC is experiencing "the struggle of a denomination whose Dutch ethnic glue will no longer hold," and he called for Calvin Seminary and the Home Missions Board to

work together in church planting. Home Missions Executive Director John Rozeboom told trustees that the agency is working to establish congregations that represent "the most flourishing examples of what it means to be Christian Reformed in North America." He also said that the CRC is starting more new churches than most denominations, as well as ethnic churches.

Lifetime commitment to Christian education

The board also:

- Projected an increase of between 2.5 and 3 per cent in Ministry Shares for the fiscal year 2001-02, to keep up with the rate of inflation.

- Heard a presentation from Milton Kuyers about a "covenantal model" of financing Christian education. Mr. Kuyers told of the experience of his congregation, Brookfield CRC in Brookfield, Wisc., which 22 years ago set up a fund to pay for Christian education for all children in the congregation, from kindergarten through college. "We adopted a lifetime commitment to Christian education, all together," he said. Despite

initial misgivings by some members, in 22 years the fund has never had a shortfall and the congregation's other ministries have also grown. He is encouraging the denomination to make a new statement of support for Christian day school education. The board encouraged Mr. Kuyers to bring his proposal to synod by way of an overture.

- Approved grants from the CRC Foundation (figures are in U.S. \$ unless otherwise indicated):

- \$15,000 for a conference in Seattle, WA, on preventing child abuse;

- \$25,000 for Pastor-Church

Relations to help fund continuing education for pastors;

- \$50,000 for Calvin Theological Seminary to cover start-up costs associated with hiring of an ethnic minority faculty member;

- \$16,000 for the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship to conduct a study to assess the religious vitality of the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America (RCA);

- \$25,000 (Canadian) over two years to assist Christian Stewardship Services to conduct stewardship education programs in Christian Reformed congregations in Canada.

Congo Christians pray for end to violence

(Religion Today) — Christians in the Democratic Republic of Congo are asking God to save their country from disaster. The country is engulfed in anarchy, poverty, ethnic hatred, tribalism, looting, and fighting between government and rebel forces over control of the central African nation's abundant natural resources, according to World Vision. As many as 2 million people have died, including many refugees who succumbed to starvation or disease while hiding in the jungle.

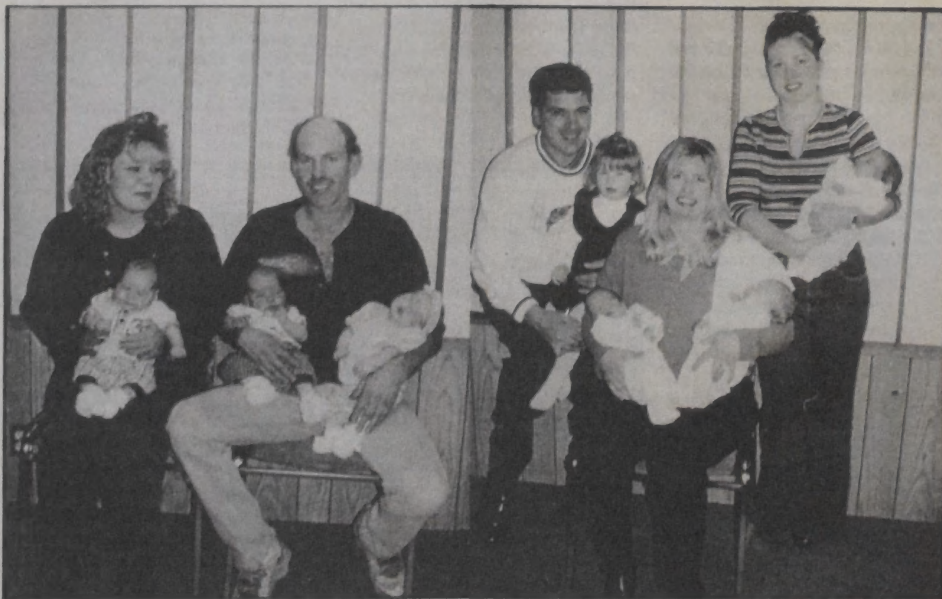
Humanitarian agencies are impeded by the fighting and lack of passable roads, and can't provide enough help, according to a spokesman for the World Food Program, part of the United Nations. "The entire socio-economic fabric of the country is ruined. In-

frastructures are non-existent, areas that used to produce surplus food are no longer producing, and the roads have been destroyed."

About 40,000 people from several tribes and denominations attended a reconciliation conference in September organized by Congo churches.

The leaders recognize that only God can deliver the nation from war and heal its wounds, World Vision reported. About 300 Christian leaders attended the "Stand in the Gap" prayer conference Nov. 29 - Dec. 1. An international team of prayer leaders led the meeting. The ministry is asking churches worldwide to join them in praying for an end to the violence, the withdrawal of foreign troops, the start of peace negotiations, and God's protection for the participants.

Church gains two sets of triplets



COURTESY FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH, KINGSTON

First Christian Reformed Church in Kingston, Ontario gained an entire Sunday school class this past year — in only two births. In the space of less than one month two mothers in the congregation gave birth to triplets. Rob and Wendy Santin's triplets (above left) were born August 29, a few weeks premature. Emily, Taylor and Zachary — two girls and one boy — weighed about three pounds each. Henry and Maureen Hiemstra's triplets (above right) — two boys and one girl — were also born premature, but they weighed an amazing six pounds each.

Both families are coping well and have benefited from the help of family and friends to carry them through the first few weeks. The Hiemstras are looking for a larger home. They now live in a two bedroom home and have been sleeping in the living room. The church held a huge combined baby shower on Nov. 18 to celebrate the births and to help the parents along.

Islam-Christian violence erupts in Côte d'Ivoire

(Religion Today) — Christians in Côte d'Ivoire (formerly Ivory Coast) are facing persecution at the hands of Muslim aggressors. Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast, was torn apart by two days of rioting Dec. 4-5 and as many as 50 people may have been killed, according to Barnabas Fund, a United Kingdom-based ministry to persecuted Christians.

Christians and ethnic southern Ivorians were singled out, the ministry said. The fighting began when thousands of supporters of a Muslim political party took to the streets to protest a Supreme Court decision banning their leader, Alassane Dramane Ouattara, from standing in parliamentary elections, Barnabas reported.

The protesters erected barricades and, armed with guns, swords, machetes and clubs, systematically stopped residents in the streets, Barnabas said. Christians and other non-Muslims were harassed, beaten, stabbed, and killed — including several schoolchildren. Other gangs launched attacks on police stations and government offices, killing several police officers and soldiers.

The situation calmed by Dec. 6, but there still is danger. In the majority-Muslim north of the country the violence has continued and many fear a Muslim-Christian civil war. Some Muslims are calling for the north to secede and set itself up as an Islamic republic with Ouattara as its president.

Church/Family

East African Consultation: more than one could hope for

GRAND RAPIDS (REC) — The Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) Review and Renew Consultation held Nov. 14-18 at the Salem Centre in Kolonyi, Uganda brought together key leaders from member denominations in Kenya and Uganda to consider how to minister more effectively, especially in areas of Youth and Christian education. Leaders from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Uganda (headquartered in Kampala, Uganda), The Christian Reformed Church of East Africa (Mbale, Uganda) and three neighboring denominations joined the Reformed Church of East Africa (Eldoret, Kenya) in the Consultation (Reformed Baptist, Evangelical Free and Evangelical Presbyterian).

Share experiences, wisdom

This was the second Consultation organized by REC's Secretary for Youth and Christian Nurture, Jim Lont, (in cooperation with the Commission for Youth and Christian Nurture). The first was in Nigeria in March. Lont stressed that this was a Consultation to share experiences and wisdom (not to listen to "how to do it" lectures) of REC Churches (not individuals) so that after reviewing what had been done, the Churches could renew their ministry efforts.

This Consultation was enhanced by serious consideration of HIV/AIDS issues concerning

youth, and issues of strengthening the churches for more effective ministry (for these are mostly young churches with little sustainable income). Resource persons from Christian Reformed World Relief enriched understanding in these areas. Visits to congregations in the host CRCEA area also proved of great value.

What to do together

As in each consultation, after considering what and how to do better as a denomination, the leaders were asked to consider what if anything they should do *together*. After serious discussion, REC denominational leaders present covenanted to meet at least twice a year in what they are calling "The East Africa Reformed Council" to work together on issues of leadership training, joint evangelism, annual conferences for members, and AIDS awareness.

Members chose Rev. Robert Chepkuto (RCEA) as chair, Rev. Paul Gudoyi (CRCEA) as secretary and Rev. Wabulo Wilberforce (RPCU) as treasurer.

"It was exciting," remarked Richard Van Houten, REC General Secretary, "to see these Churches, each preoccupied with their own heavy responsibilities and concerns (and even with histories of separation in the past), come together to strengthen each other in ministry for the future."

Hundreds of churches demolished in China

WENZHO, China (Religion Today) — China is demolishing hundreds of underground Christian churches and temples. Chinese newspapers have reported a crackdown on unauthorized worship in the southern coastal city of Wenzhou, an area isolated from government control where religions, private enterprise, and smuggling thrive, according to news reports.

1000 temples and churches shut down

More than 1,000 temples, churches, and ancestral halls in the area have been shut down since November, and many have been demolished, according to articles in state-run newspapers. One newspaper reported that officials used explosives to destroy a large church on Dec. 1, and another newspaper published a photograph

of workers smashing "illegal religious centers" with sledgehammers, according to news reports.

China says it allows religious freedom, but it restricts religious practice. Congregations are required to be sanctioned by the government, and those that are not are often accused of defrauding or abusing their followers. A number of unapproved sects, cults, and underground religious groups have prospered as Communist ideology loses its appeal, according to *The Washington Post*.

The heavy-handed actions come less than a month after China agreed to resume human rights talks with the United States, and just before Christmas. "All these important feast days, like Christmas and Easter, they always crack down," Joseph Kung, head of the U.S.-based Cardinal Kung Foundation, told Agence France-Presse.

Surviving the storm in a dorm

The weather forecast was downright ugly and I had exams scheduled for the next two days in Kitchener, about an hour away from home in good weather. Jack clicked off the TV and looked at me, "Pack a bag and get going now. I don't want to look at your pouty face if the storm hits early and you're stuck here at home instead of writing your exams." It didn't take much more persuasion. I quickly stuffed some clothes into a bag, grabbed my books and daughter Stephanie (a full time student) and set out for EBC.

Monday went well enough and I wrote my first exam. The promised storm didn't start until almost noon, but by two o'clock the snow was already piling up. That evening was amazing. The snow seemed to just drop out of the sky. Even walking from one building to the next on campus you got covered in it. The cars in the parking lot looked like individual snow banks. I was glad that I didn't have to drive home, for there was no longer any distinction between city streets and the sidewalks.

Major league dust-bunnies

Staying in residence was an interesting experience. The air was filled with the aroma of herbal tea and popcorn. The halls were filled with college girls, laughing and chatting, and the sounds of various stereos. I had been given a room vacated by its occupant who quit school at midterm. It was empty except for some major league dust-bunnies and the striped institutional mattresses on the two beds. I spent the evening in the library, studying until bedtime.

I never sleep well away from home, so I just lay there and hoped to get enough sleep to see me through the next day. All of a sudden there was this deep rumbling sound overhead and I realized the laundry room was located on the floor above. *Even I don't do laundry at 11:30 p.m.!* However, after a while I drifted off to sleep.

Laundry at 4:15 a.m.?!

I nearly jumped out of my sleeping bag when the rumbling sound again rudely interrupted the darkness some hours later. Assuming it was time to get up, I checked my watch.

WHO DOES LAUNDRY AT 4:15 a.m.?!

Intangible Things

Heidi VanDerSlikke

Decidedly un-Christian thoughts filled my head. I finally settled down and went back to sleep. Just before 6:00 I turned off my alarm clock so it wouldn't wake up the whole dorm. I tiptoed around the room, getting my things together to go have a shower. At precisely 6:00 a.m. an alarm clock down the hall began bleating woefully (and loudly). It was still ringing when I came out of the washroom at 6:30 and I wondered how anyone could sleep through that racket. I learned later it's a daily ritual in Lower Lehman.

I had a full hour to scan my notes one last time and then I pulled on my boots and jacket and started out for breakfast. I had survived the night and now I was ready to take my two remaining exams and head for home. I was thinking, *How nice that I don't have to drive in this morning*, when I came face to face with the hand printed announcement: "All exams cancelled for today due to storm. Rescheduled for same time tomorrow."

So there I stood — fully prepared for exams, but totally unable to process the idea of staying in the dorm for another night. I'm convinced God does these things from time to time just to remind me I'm not nearly as in control as I think. I had been so focused on the exams that I never even considered the possibility they might be postponed because of the storm. So what if half the province was immobilized? I was ready to write! How could this not go through?

Now, it's risky to go on public record with your New Year's resolution. But if I were to do so, I'd say that this year I will remember not to get so wrapped up in anything that I forget who's really in charge. Well, that's my plan anyway, and we all know how plans can change.



Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harrison, Ont., when there's not a snowstorm brewing.

Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa condemns discrimination against women

SOUTH AFRICA (REC) — "The Dutch Reformed Church . . . must and shall do something to remove discrimination against women, especially female candidates for ministry," according to Pieter Potgieter. Potgieter is the moderator of the General Synodal Commission of the Dutch Reformed Church, and he was reporting on its decisions in early November.

A report with recommendations came to this commission from a conference in September, a conference marking the tenth anniversary of the DRC's decision to allow women to be ordained as

ministers. The commission acknowledged that discrimination against women was and is a sin. The commission confessed their own role in unjust and offensive conduct, whether conscious or unconscious. It also encouraged churches and members to be

sensitive to any condescending language or judgments.

The commission authorized a committee to make more specific recommendations to oppose discrimination against women for the DRC synod in 2002. (*Die Kerkbode*)

For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905) 682-8313, or by e-mail to: cceditor@aol.com

Opinion

The Church institute in the world

Arie Leder

Imagine yourself in a Sunday morning worship service listening to a minister who argues that the Bible demands obedience to an economic policy you recognize as sponsored by the Canadian Alliance. You are a member of the Alliance and so you agree. Next Sunday, however, a guest pastor proclaims biblical a social policy you recognize to come from the New Democratic Party. You're on the phone before you finished your first cup of coffee.

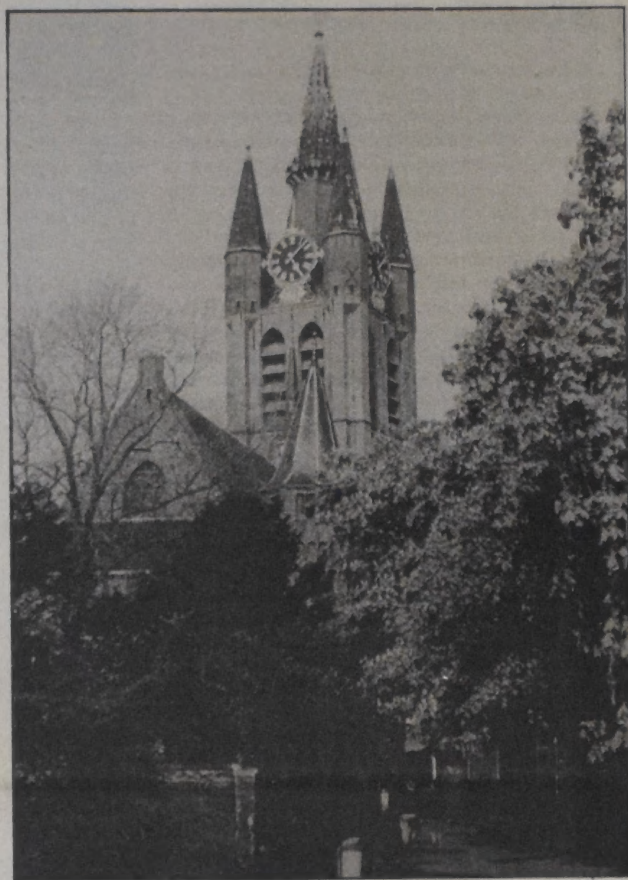
The pulpit may not bind you

It may be the case that one or both of these policies have merit. As a Christian citizen you may vote for either one. But usually the pulpit may not bind you to a particular policy by declaring it to be a necessary consequence of the gospel. That is not the task of the instituted church in the Reformed tradition. Neither from the local pulpit or a denomination's administrative centre. But it does happen. Recently the co-ordinator for Social Justice and Hunger Action of the CRCNA wrote a U.S. Senator urging him to support a particular bill before the Senate Finance Committee. The bill may have many merits and Christian citizens may and should write their representatives. But office-bearers or other representatives of the instituted church may not do so in their official capacities, nor may they use their office to tell other Christians to do it.

What is the problem?

In both, the imaginary case and the letter to the U.S. senator, the gospel has been identified with a particular social and political policy. When the gospel is so linked with particular policies, policies about which believers may and do differ, the church places the gospel in jeopardy by identifying the gospel with a particular political party's policy on some matter. Doing that makes it appear that one party's social, economic, or political policies are Christian and others not. When such particular policies, from the left or the right, are identified with the church institute it devastates the preaching of the gospel.

But the gospel makes no distinction among political parties; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Moreover, there are political parties or movements, such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Communist Party, whose political views contradict the truth of the gospel. These political movements



BERT WITVOET

"When such particular policies, from the left or the right, are identified with the church institute it devastates the preaching of the gospel."

need radical transformation which can only come from Christ crucified, died, and risen, not from any other political party.

Sometimes the church must speak out on clear moral issues such as the abortion of unborn children, slavery, or unjust wars. But then it is the Church through its assemblies, and ultimately Synod in the Christian Reformed Church, that decides what the clear moral issue is, not an individual member or office-bearer.

The above examples illustrate the problem of understanding the fundamental task of the instituted church. Let me briefly outline the distinction the Reformed tradition makes between the church as institute and the church as organism.

Church institute and organism

The Belgic Confession (art. 29) teaches that the marks of the true church are: the pure preaching of the gospel, the pure administration of the sacraments, and church discipline. Together, these marks distinguish the church from all other human organizations. No other human organization has the compe-

tence to exercise these.

But, do not all Christians have the task to preach the gospel? Cannot mission organizations send out men and women and call sinners to repentance? To be sure. But these have not the authority to administer the sacraments or church discipline. Together, the marks of the church characterize the church Christ instituted to serve him, a community under the spiritual authority of Christ through his office-bearers: elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word. The authority of the instituted church is spiritual.

All church members are disciples of Jesus Christ, some of whom will serve as elders, deacons, or ministers of the word. With the exception of the ministers of the word whose calling is limited to the instituted church, all disciples serve Christ in a variety of callings outside the instituted church. In the Reformed theological tradition the church as organism refers to the body of Christ empowered to serve him in all areas of life. Thus, Christ's disciples are homemakers, librarians, politicians, teachers, physicians, lawyers, truck drivers,

electricians, steelworkers, engineers, and more. No matter their calling, each receives training and submits to the roles peculiar to their chosen profession. And, in their work each exercises an authority peculiar to their calling: the engineer in engineering, the physician in medicine, the teacher in the classroom, the judge in the courtroom, parents in the home. In the Reformed tradition we understand such authority is rooted in God's call.

In part, the distinction between the church as institute and the church as organism is related to the competence, or authority, of different human organizations. For example, Christian families have their times of Bible reading, reflection on them, prayer, and they may sing a psalm or hymn at that time. For none of this do they need the permission of the elders, nor do they have to use a prescribed order of worship. Some may, and others not, sing from the official hymnal of their church. More than that, if you compare the devotional patterns of families from the same local church you may find a wide variety in their practises. Other kinds of Christian organizations may use prayer and Scripture readings at one time or another.

But the use of Scripture, prayers, and spiritual songs does not endow such organizations with the authority to create new hymnals or liturgies, to decide who may attend the Lord's Supper or be baptized, to call disciples into the special tasks of elder, deacon or minister of the Word, or to declare sinners outside of and those who repent inside the Kingdom of God.

The Church and social concerns

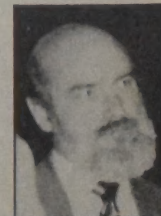
But what about the poverty, hunger, injustice? Does not the church have a task here? Of course. Christ's disciples ought to be concerned and active, in the name of Christ, to help the poor, battle hunger, disease, and injustice. The instituted church has sent out mission teams of medical personnel, carpenters, teachers, well diggers, and agricultural specialists. Some local churches have food banks. But, should the food, the new well, medicine, or schools come with political or social strings attached? You get what you need if you agree to a particular policy about getting rid of Third World debt, or redistribution of the income of the well-to-do to the poor, or making legal public money for Christian schools. Of course not.

Christians have voluntarily

organized in order to deal with such concerns. But these organizations are not part of the church as institute. Participation in such organizations is not based on being a member of a particular church, nor is joining any one of them a necessary consequence of being a Christian. Moreover, at critical moments in the life of a society we sometimes find unexpected partners: Catholics and Protestants working together to speak out against abortion, for vouchers that can be used to pay for public or private education, or the vulgarization of our culture. Such partnership does not place the protestant under the authority of the pope, nor the catholic under the authority of a council or presbytery. These are Christians working and speaking together in the name of Christ.

Back to Sunday morning

You are in a Sunday morning worship again and you have just heard a sermon on Leviticus 25 about the law of the jubilee. The sermon has made it clear that the land belongs to the Lord, that none of his people may regard it as personal property to do with as they want. The minister has referred you to 1 Kings 21, the story of Ahab and Naboth, and Acts 3, the communal gathering of possessions. He also emphasized the responsibility of Christians to be stewards of the environment because, after all, this is our Father's world. But he did not mention Green Peace, made no reference to aboriginal claims on the land, did not condemn nuclear power, nor did he argue that clear cutting timber or the use of rich farmland for building housing for the poor was appropriate. In this he was right. The minister should not so link the gospel to particular policies from the pulpit as an officebearer of the Church institute, nor should any of its representatives in their official capacity. It is up to believers in the exercise of their political and social responsibilities, the church as organism, to formulate the particular social policies they deem to correspond to a stewardly administration of the environment, God's creation.



Arie C. Leder is a Professor of Old Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Book Review/Psychology

Is persecution ever sweet?

Open Doors
International and
BROTHER ANDREW
Present

SWEET PERSECUTION

A 30-day Devotional
with Scriptures, Prayers
and Encouraging Thoughts
by Ron Brackin
Foreword by Johan Compagnen

Sweet Persecution

by Ron Brackin

Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1999.

ISBN 0-7642-2285-6 108 pp.

Reviewed by Alan Doerksen

Sweet Persecution is an unusual book title that begs the question: Can persecution ever be sweet?

Its author, Ron Brackin, answers in the introduction, "Definitely not in the sense of the pain and loss suffered. But it is indeed sweet in a much deeper sense — the sense experienced by the apostles who, after being flogged, 'left the Sanhedrin rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.' (Acts 5:41)"

Sweet Persecution is a 30-day devotional which tells Biblical stories of people persecuted for their faith followed by stories of recent or present-day persecuted Christians. Each devotional offers observations on a Bible passage, followed by a "Food for Thought" section, which asks thought-provoking questions about persecution, and "For Further Study," which refers the reader to other related Bible stories. Some devotionals also offer suggested activities, such as visiting a

mosque and having a discussion with the imam (teacher) about Islam and how it differs from Christianity. "This information will help you when God gives you opportunities to speak with Muslims — and he will, if you ask him to do so," writes Brackin. He suggests the book be used for personal study and prayer, or for Sunday school or house groups.

No theology of persecution

"Western Christianity today has no theology of persecution," asserts Brackin in the introduction. "Ours is a theology of prosperity — a faith without risk and a salvation that does little more than snatch us away from the rim of hell, pat us on the back, and send us on our way with our heavenly ticket punched. The Bible, however, paints a radically different picture."

Brackin points to key Bible passages which emphasize the significance of persecution to Christians. "Persecution is inevitable in the life of every Christian, whether it takes the form of beatings, imprisonment, and martyrdom or, as is more common in the West, in the form of temptations."

Brackin refers to what he calls God's first and second greatest acts of love: "The first was sending

Start the new year right: take charge of your personal happiness

Her troubled look disappeared and she sat quietly for a while with a smile on her face. She got it. She finally realized, when life is not working out it is easy to blame the other person — her spouse, her children, her parents, her sibling or her friend. But personal happiness comes with personal responsibility. And that means letting others be responsible for their lives while she is responsible for hers.

She laughed out loud and her eyes sparkled. "Free at last?" she questioned. "Hopefully," I answered cautiously, knowing how much work she would have to do on herself. Yet Megan wanted to relish her insight and savor the moment. She moved from being a victim from the past to accepting responsibility for working through issues so that she could have more control over her own life.

Struggling with blame

When conflict disrupts our lives it seems second nature to hold others responsible. How often don't we say: "You make me so angry!" or "You made me do it!" or "Why did you do that to me?" None of these statements are helpful in trying to resolve a situation at hand.

Jeffrey A. Kottler in *Beyond Blame: A New Way of Resolving Conflicts in Relationships*, believes when we attempt to assign blame for a problem, we most likely follow one of three possible scenarios. None are totally accurate. First, we prefer to blame the other person — "It is all your fault. If only you were different...." Second, we *scapegoat* and insist, "We got pulled into the situation, if they had done things different...." Both styles attribute blame to circumstances outside of our control. Unfortunately, as long as our troubles are other people's fault, we have no choice but to wait for them to see the error of their ways. In the third instance, however, we blame *ourselves*: "It is all my fault. I should have...." This is also probably somewhat distorted since it is highly unlikely that anything is ever entirely one person's fault. Nevertheless, trying to understand what part we may be playing in a conflict is still a more empowering way to work through problems

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

because we may want to commit ourselves to acting differently.

Needing to grow up

When we are young we adopt the delightful habit of accusing others of doing everything wrong. This tactic helps us protect our fragile self-image. As we move into our twenties, however, our moral development should be at a point where we can accept a certain amount of shared responsibility in troublesome situations. Unfortunately, some of us never get there and we remain "stuck" at an immature developmental level.

Most of us do not realize that good relationships with others come from having a good relationship with ourselves first. This is a crucial part of the jigsaw puzzle of good interpersonal relationships. Yet, we do not often give ourselves the chance to get to know ourselves better. We are so busy *doing* we do not get around to *being*.

Freedom and personal responsibility

Most of us know about the second sin in the Garden of Eden. It is all about blame. Adam blames God and Eve. Eve blames the serpent. So it should not surprise us that blame comes naturally to all of us. What is surprising, however, is the freedom we gain when we let go of blame and begin to take responsibility for our own happiness. So let us challenge ourselves at the beginning of this new year not to wait for others to change but to forge a path for ourselves that will help us be who we were intended to be.



*The blame equation contained in this column does not apply to victims of abuse.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

his only Son to pay the unimaginable price for our sins. The second was allowing his redeemed children — you and me — to suffer and die for the name of his Son."

Sweet Persecution is a publication of Open Doors International, an agency which has ministered to the persecuted church for almost 45 years. In the book's foreword, John Compagnen, President of Open Doors International, writes, "... it is only in recent times that the church in the Western world has begun to wake up to the fact that the body of Christ is under siege. For us, persecution is not the latest buzz word but an ongoing challenge to make the plight of the church known. Hence this devotional." He notes, "Someone once said that if you took suffering out of the New Testament, it would be a very thin book."

Sweet Persecution is a good eye-opener for Christians not familiar with the plight of the persecuted church, and provides thoughtful material for study and

prayer which can help Christians in the West strengthen their ties with their brothers and sisters in countries where persecution is more severe.

Winter Skin Quick Tip Call it Mother Nature's moisture secret

(NC)—Combine glycerin and petrolatum with a positively-charged formula on our naturally, negatively-charged skin — and what have you got? "A lotion that is attracted to the skin," says Heather Morbrook, spokesperson for the Curel line at Jergens, "and it actually holds the moisture there for the entire day — even after you wash." The formula is known as the "cationic" ingredient, patented by Curel and found in their Therapeutic Moisturizing Lotion, in Soothing Hands Cream, and in the Concentrated Moisturizing Cream. According to Morbrook, recent clinical studies tested the effectiveness of the formula against several leading brands and found that Curel's cationic ingredient demonstrated vastly superior moisturizing capabilities.

News Canada

Analysis

Viewing the Aqsa Intafada up close: A diary in two parts

Bert de Vries

Amman, 4 October 2000

On Friday, September 29, Israeli politician Ariel Sharon paid a controversial "visit" to the plaza surrounding the Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, two important Islamic shrines in Jerusalem's Old City. In the resultant tumult,

'What audiences across the ocean perceive and what the victims over here experience are worlds apart.'

Israeli soldiers fired into the crowd of Muslim worshippers armed only with stones. When Palestinian spokesperson Hanan Ashrawi graphically described the killing in an NPR interview, the reporter retorted, "But hadn't those Palestinians just listened to a fiery sermon?" As if the worshippers invited those bullets to hit them! There was the usual instant readiness to blame the victims, and to believe Israeli disclaimers that the shooting was self-defense: reluctant bullets against wanton stones.

'I will never, never forget'

The next day my wife and I traveled from Michigan to Amman. On a stopover in Paris, the front page of *Le Figaro* featured those gruesome, pathetic pictures of Mohammad Durra and his father, hiding behind a garbage drum in Gaza: first the waving arms and frantic, pleading faces, then the slumped bodies, dead boy and wounded father. In Amman the pictures engraved themselves on our psyches, the still pictures on the front pages, the cam-corded sequence on TV. "No matter whether peace comes and justice is done, or we all remain imprisoned under occupation, I will never, never forget that boy," exclaimed a Palestinian friend.

Local newspapers not only kept count (67 dead, thousands wounded after five days), but also identified victims and gave precise accounts of the manner of dying. Most were Palestinians from the occupation, a smaller number were Israeli Arabs, several were Israeli soldiers, and one a Jewish civilian. Almost all were young, from ordinary families, not gangsters or terrorists. Wounds were severe, and mostly to heads and chests, the work of snipers firing impact-exploding bullets.

Meanwhile, Jamal Durra, the wounded father, was flown from Gaza to a Jordanian hospital, along



Israeli soldiers clash with Palestinian stone throwers in Jerusalem.

with other wounded. Front pages and television coverage now featured them, Jamal giving a second-by-second description of his boy's killing: a young man paralyzed when a rubber bullet crushed his neck vertebrae, telling his story to the cameras. Jordanians, all indignant and regretting the Jordanian-Israeli peace, focused on this mission of mercy. King Abdullah was shown on television donating his blood to spearhead a popular drive for the wounded.

News of Ariel Sharon's denial that his mosque visit had anything to do with the Palestinian demonstrations appeared on the same page as an editorial by a Jordanian friend pinning the full blame on him. Who was right?

The 'butcher'

Ariel Sharon is remembered as the "butcher" of Sabra and Shatila. As Defense Minister in 1982, he oversaw Operation Galilee, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. After the PLO was expelled from Beirut, his troops watched from the rooftops while Lebanese Christian forces entered those camps, to kill scores of the unarmed Palestinian inhabitants. Though forced to resign, he returned as Housing Minister in Benjamin Netanyahu's government. In the mid-90s, he oversaw the expanding wave of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, which continues today — a conquest by construction that has gone without reprimand by the current U.S. administration. He is now the leader of Israel's Likud Party — and a shame to Israeli peace activists.

Some years ago, Sharon bought a house in the Muslim quarter of old Jerusalem, one of those picturesque places that arch over the main thoroughfare from the Damascus Gate to the Dome of the Rock. Since then, he has kept a night-lit menorah on the roof, and a three-story long Israeli flag

draped down from the roof to the top of the arch above the street. Israeli soldiers stand in the archway to guard his property. Each day at prayer time throngs of Muslim worshippers — on Fridays there are thousands, Palestinians and pilgrims — pass under that flag, and feel the in-your-face taunt of its owner.

When Palestinians see their houses bulldozed to make space for settlers' houses, when they are stopped at military check points or harassed by gun-toting settlers, when they see military subjugation turning into the irreversible apartheid conditions of the peace proposals, Sharon's anti-Arab misdeeds are never far out of mind.

All that baggage came with Sharon and his militia, when they took their "casual" stroll around the mosque platform. The one Arab-Israeli agreement that had worked fairly well, that Muslim worshippers would have access to the mosques, and Jewish worshippers to the Wailing Wall, each overseen by their respective clerical spheres, was violated and made to feel a sacrilege by the very person of Sharon. Surely he triggered the popular insurrection that has followed.

'We would rather die'

After five days of mounting death toll, we hear Christiane Amanpour's confident voice on CNN, relaying the warning pronouncement of Prime Minister Ehud Barak: Resumption of peace negotiations will still be possible if only the Palestinians will end their violence. She does not relay the sentiments of the young stone throwers: We would rather die than submit to your humiliations. What audiences across the ocean perceive and what the victims over here experience are worlds apart.

I fear Mohammad Durra's death and his father's protestations were for naught.

West Bank, October 12, 2000

After days of unabated violence and a steady rise in Palestinian casualties, a lull prompted my crossing from Amman to Jerusalem for meetings with teaching partners at Birzeit University outside Ramallah. Though I could travel to Ramallah easily, my colleague was still stuck at home up north, the road blocked by armed Israeli settlers. I decided to spend the afternoon shopping for items requested by relatives — olive wood sheep from Bethlehem, hand-painted dishes from Jerusalem.

Harvest of blood and oil

The road passing Rachel's Tomb into Bethlehem was still strewn with the rocks hurled days before, the ash piles of burned tires, and the barricade of barrels and bed frames shoved aside just enough to allow cars from Jerusalem through. Later, the olive wood factory owner told me that, days before, he and his family had harvested the olives in their orchard adjacent to the tomb while the demonstrators and soldiers hurled rocks and fired bullets only yards away! Now the rocks lay still and the trees stood stripped — the harvests of blood and oil completed.

While there, I also updated my photo-record of Har Homa (the coined Hebrew name; Jebel Abu Ghnaim is the original Arabic name), a large hill between "Shepherd's Field" and Jerusalem. You may remember that international protests had forced a (temporary) halt to the construction of an Israeli neighborhood on this West Bank land. Once tree-covered, the hill is now a forest of high-rise concrete skeletons ready for window glass. What the government of Netanyahu — the peace breaker — had begun, the regime of Barak — the peacemaker — is completing. Is this the "generosity" that made Israel so eager, and the stinginess

that made Palestine so reticent, in the recent negotiating cycle?

Another gruesome picture

The next day, returning from Birzeit, I stopped in downtown Ramallah to photograph a banner protesting Israeli violence, signed: "The international students of Birzeit University against apartheid!" (These are European and American students studying Arabic language and culture.) I was unaware that only blocks away an angry crowd had overpowered the police station and killed two Israeli army infiltrators being held in protective custody. Later the world was treated to another gruesome picture sequence: the body of one of the Israelis crumpled on the ground below, the Palestinian who had thrown him standing above in the window, bloodied arms raised in "victory." That night CNN gave live coverage of Cobra gun-ship rockets slamming into police stations all over the West Bank and Gaza. (America gets its Olympics digested, its wars raw!)

On the way back to Jerusalem I rode in the rear of a service taxi, amidst crates of vegetables that another passenger had bought in the Ramallah market. Near Jerusalem a Palestinian worker carrying mason's tools got in, looked at all the vegetables and then at me, the foreigner in their midst, with quizzically raised eyebrows. I grinned, and said in Arabic, "Stocking up for the war." He laughed, and we exchanged the conspiratorial hand-slap that turns total strangers into fast friends. After more banter he became serious and confided, "You know, I'm a Palestinian mason building Israeli houses at Jebel Abu Ghnaim. I hate doing this work, but even after what's happened today, I have to. It's the only job I can get, and without it we couldn't feed our children." His sad Arab words trailed off in acceptance of his subjugation.

In the taxi from the bridge back to Amman, with live radio coverage of the Israeli punitive bombing in the background, I reflected on my experiences. More than ever I understand that the peace cannot be a mere realty transaction, an agreement to stop asking for the return of lands taken away, in this case. It must include a full recognition of the equal dignity of the other. That was true in the civil rights struggles of Selma and Johannesburg; it holds equally for Jerusalem.

Analysis

South Africa: after the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission'



Nelson Mandela poses in his old Robben Island jail cell, where he began writing his book of memoirs: *Long Walk to Freedom*

in Johannesburg. The 55 per cent unemployment rate among blacks may be a factor. While visiting in the small Orange State city of Kroonstad, the Corrections Training Centre staff, our hosts for the first week, accompanied us into the city shopping area to make sure we were not targeted as easy robbery victims. The businesses and the media of Kroonstad were ready for the arrival of some 300 visitors to the International Prison Chaplains Association Conference. Some of my most meaningful contacts with white and black residents occurred during my jogging runs as I met people walking to work, cleaning the street, shopping or in the openness of the shanty town settlements.

Blacks eagerly taking over

The Afrikaner white shopkeepers in Kroonstad said that business was normal and that little had changed in the family business since 1994, when Nelson Mandela was elected president. However, the operations of large businesses like the airlines, the government and the prisons had white middle managers replaced by black citizens. This alarmed some white Afrikaners, but the blacks were eagerly taking over, although not always without trials and errors. Some Afrikaners have left for Canada and Australia. Others like Kobus (formerly the head chaplain of corrections) and Rose Bezuidenhout are committed to stay as partners in rebuilding a new South Africa.

Discussions with Prof. Piet Meiring, a Dutch Reformed member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (T&R) and author of *Chronicles of the Truth Commission*, illustrated the trials, pain, and victories of the 30 month Commission history. Getting his Dutch Reformed Church on board was most arduous and challenging. As Nelson Mandela said, "We are a country of perpetrators and victims. It is not an 'us versus them' scenario."

The Commission's work is not done even though it is officially finished. "There needs to be more mini-commissions in the workplaces and the villages until the necessary healing has taken place," concluded Meiring.

It is insightful to learn that there have been 19 T&R Commissions initiated around the world in countries ranging from Chile in South America to Rwanda in Africa. Why did many fail while South Africa's T&R achieved better results? T&R is a legal process. At the beginning of the South African T&R process, long periods of silence were broken by prayer and



Desmond Tutu

singing initiated by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Even when protests were raised about Christian and religious interference in this process, the protests were drowned out. So important was prayer to Desmond Tutu that when a psychologist came from Great Britain

to debrief and sustain the wearied T&R leaders, they learned that Tutu daily withdrew to pray between 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. while others went for lunch.

T&R had to be religious

The T&R had to be religious to be successful confirmed Meiring. Since so many South Africans, black and white, are religious, there was "something to build on." As Archbishop Tutu explained, there was a need to see "what we have done to each other. There are more than facts at stake." In 1998 the T&R process officially closed the books. However, amnesty is still going on, hoping to end this year.

Many people were killed in South Africa, causing unimaginable pain to survivors. Mark

Mathabane, author of *Kaffir Boy*, was a survivor of the June 16, 1976 Soweto Student Rebellion. He grieves deeply his survival when peers were brutally murdered and the evidence has been discussed publicly. How does one forgive those who torture and are not sorry?

This question became clearer when a judge asked a woman what kind of punishment she wanted the murderers of her son to have. "No," she said to the judge, "I was looking for a different reason, your honor...I wanted to know whom to forgive." Finding the truth helped her to forgive her son's murderers and uphold her integrity as a human being. Revenge contaminates the soul. Restorative justice makes reconciliation possible. One

See SOUTH AFRICA p. 14...

TSEPO: challenging despair, creating hope

John de Vries, Jr.

KROONSTAD, South Africa — The experience of attending the fourth meeting of the International Prison Chaplains Association (IPCA) at the Corrections Training Centre in Kroonstad, South Africa, was overwhelming in its richness of diversity, in its contrasts among the 310 participants from 71 countries, in its network of support for chaplains and in its growing international voice on behalf of prison chaplains and the dignity of inmates.

The theme of the conference, TSEPO: Challenging Despair, Creating Hope, guided the rich diversity of international speakers, animated the workshops and focused the conference celebrations.

The Kroonstad Correctional Training Centre in Kroonstad (90 minutes south of Johannesburg) provided an excellent conference-village setting. The conference delegates represented marked contrasts. Our western clothing appeared quite ordinary in contrast to the colourful flowing dress of many African and Asian country delegates. Most of us (50+ from Canada) had jobs and homes to return to after the conference. This was not the case for delegates from Indonesian and African countries gripped in war. Many chaplains get no paycheques but have to scrounge for their own financial support.

Looking to Canadians for leadership

Delegates looked to Canadians for leadership and new ideas to address the changing realities of prisons around the world. Personally, I

learned much from their stories. Elena, a Russian chaplain, and Declan, an Irish chaplain, illustrated that prisons are more than walled institutions isolated from the community. In both Russia and Ireland everyone knows family or friends who have been in prison. As a result prisons may be physically inferior, but socially and spiritually they are more alive and integrated with the community through visitation and other programs. But things are changing. The next jail being built in South Africa will be its first mega-jail built using the California model.

Pain and victories of dismantling apartheid

The chaplain stories and the relationships we formed at the conference stand out. But the speakers were also informative and provocative. Piet Meiring, Dutch Reformed Church participant on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission introduced us to the trials and pain and victories experienced during the dismantling of apartheid. Commissioner Ole Ingstrup, CSC, challenged us to be prophetic and challenge systems to explore alternatives to prison.

Pierre Allard was upbeat and encouraging in his support of chaplains. In his vision for IPCA the common concerns of inmates world-wide will be addressed as well. Pierre's re-election assured delegates that through the Ottawa office there would be access to resources and chaplain connections. Chris Marshall from New Zealand made a substantial contribution to the conference with his extensive biblical studies and reflections on

restorative justice.

The conferees prepared a preliminary draft of a statement to be sent to governments; it will highlight inmates' concerns regarding tuberculosis and AIDS, offer models of restorative justice as alternative to prison, raise concern regarding the treatment of imprisoned women, and plead for application of the United Nations standards for all prisoners. Another statement will go to churches urging them to sustain a prophetic voice, to work for better access to prisoners, to help prisoners re-enter society, and to support community chaplains. The declaration includes affirmation of the dignity of the inmate and highlights the needs of the victims. For the chaplain the declaration aims to express solidarity, hope, and guidance for internal supports.

Conferences come and go. IPCA is evolving into something more. It will have a life between conferences. The growing development of regional IPCA chapters will address the ongoing need for chaplains to connect for support, information and responses to critical issues. Whereas IPCA began as a conference of Christian chaplains, awareness of growing pluralism among and within prison communities around the world opened the eyes of the participants to the possibility of even wider unity among God's children. That is one item that IPCA will be facing as it matures and evolves in addressing the issues of the changing world-wide prison realities.

Rev. John de Vries Jr. is co-ordinator of Chaplaincy Services Ontario.

My first glimpse

My first glimpse of the effect of the commission's work occurred when I read a Johannesburg newspaper on the flight crossing Africa. The headline featured the death of Harry Oppenheimer, son of the founder of the famous diamond mines in Kimberly, South Africa. The press was noticeably kind to him. It spared anger over the 'enslavement' of the African blacks in past mining endeavors. That 'gentlemanly' truce to not rouse animosity among the races in South Africa was experienced often in the following days among whites and blacks.

We were warned to watch our possessions and not to travel alone

Comment

How many friends do we really have?

Dear Rick,

I remember a high school teacher who warned us about using the word "friendship" too easily. He told us this in English class one day. He put his copy of *Macbeth* down and proclaimed that even the most fortunate among us would have two, maybe three, true friends during our lives.

His little homily had nothing to do with Shakespeare. It occurred the day that yearbooks were handed out. He saw the chaos in the halls (as students spent their lunch breaks trying desperately to get others to write in their covers) and was turned off by the vanity. He told us that we'd forget about most of students who wrote in our yearbooks. They'd vanish from our minds, he said. I'm 31 now, and I think I know what that teacher was getting at. I've lost touch with college friends whom I swore would befriend for life. They moved on and so did I.

What are your thoughts about this, Rick?



Dirk

Dear Dirk,

I believe that your high school teacher was right. Most of us will only have a few true friends in our lives. I think sometimes we misuse the word "friend". We make it synonymous with the word acquaintance, but they are not the same thing.

I have many acquaintances, but very few friends. Like you, I have lost touch with countless people that I really thought I would keep in touch with. I used to even feel guilty for not calling or e-mailing like I promised. It seems that often we are driven to people on the basis of shared experiences. Once the experience is over we drift apart.

This has really hit me most living in Korea. Here in Pusan I have spent a lot of time with other foreigners. I would not consider them my friends. In fact, if I were to meet these same people in Canada, it is very unlikely that I would spend any time with them. However, our shared experience of being in a strange country seems to drive us together. But the more time I spend with them, the less I feel we have in common.

This makes me want to spend less time with them. I find myself more content being alone. This scares me a bit because I will eventually return to North America, and my satisfaction in being alone may make it difficult to make new friends. Or my social skills will be so stunted that no one will want to make friends with me.

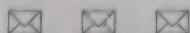


Rick

Rick,

I had the same experience in Korea. Lots of acquaintances, no real friends. One thing I appreciated about our relationship was how we often joked about being good buddies but not true friends. We acknowledged an appreciation for one another while admitting that our differences prevented a closer bond of friendship to develop. The novelty of this kind of brutal honesty made us laugh.

Common denominators are really important. At the school I'm attending now, I don't connect with many of the students because I'm the only one with even an inkling of Christian sensibility. However, when I get on the phone with friends who share my worldview, suddenly my attitudes, opinions and ideas are understood. I'm reminded of my own worth and the value of my ideas. All it takes is one or two real friends.



Dirk



Rick Van Manen

Two
Under
35



Dirk Schouten

Dear Dirk,

I think you're right on. I have a friend. Without a doubt he is my best friend. We've known each other for about 26 years. I have no one else in my life like him. Every summer I return to Canada and it feels like I never left. We can talk about anything without being afraid of being rejected. We bounce ideas off each other. We talk about the future together. We pray for each other.

We never get tired of each other. And every time we see each other again I am amazed that we have stuck together for so long.

It's interesting that my sister and his sister were friends when they were kids and my brother and his brother were friends when we were kids. Yet, they have lost touch. I tell you Dirk, this kind of friend is hard to come by. I wonder how many people can truly say that they have this kind of friend. I don't mean someone they have known for 26 years, but someone who is so close.

I've heard that when people get married their spouse becomes their best friend. But I don't think the relationship (friendship) between a husband and wife is the same as the relationship between two friends.

That relationship is hard to define. You're not related and you're not married. But you have this relationship that means so much. How do we become friends? I remember the conversations we had about our own relationship in Korea and I think it's safe to say that we are friends. But it seems that we disagreed more than we agreed. In fact, one of the reasons you suggested I write this column is so we can disagree with each other.

And then there are those tragic people who just can't seem to make any friends. We've met lots of those in Korea. I can understand why people don't have friends in high school. But, as mature adults I find it very mysterious that there are still people who just don't have any friends. I don't know.

Your friend,

Rick



Rick,

Good question. I think the ability to develop friendships has a lot to do with communication skills and the willingness to make yourself vulnerable. There are other things as well, such as compatibility, shared interests and the balance of temperaments, but communication — in my mind's eye — is the most important quality.

I remember the lonely English teachers in Korea. There was something about them that made them different. They talked about themselves a lot, seemed unable to listen to others for an extended period of time, and were unwilling to commit to anything.

But I also remember that they were very sensitive to the suffering of others, perhaps because they experienced a lot themselves. Whenever I hear The Beatles' "All the Lonely People," I think of them.

Anyway, Rick, I'm glad it's Christmas and that I can spend this time with true friends. They make all the difference in the world. I'm also looking forward to seeing you in late December. I'll pick you up in Oshawa and we'll go for donuts and coffee at Tim Horton's. Have a safe trip back to Canada.

South Africa: After the T&R Commission

continued from page 13

doesn't have to go to South Africa to discover that, but for me it clarified the possibility and the reality. For a tourist there are many snapshots of the ugly and the beautiful. Driving the highway to Kruger Park was like driving Highway 401 in Ontario — restaurants and all. But when you get off the highways, you see the contrast of riches and poverty, of cleanliness and filth, of four-star lodging for tourists and shantytown hovels for locals. However, new developments are appearing, and for the first time blacks are able to own their own

houses as part of government initiatives.

The natural beauty and land formations were breathtaking. And there was always more! Seeing the animals (the big five — lion, tiger, elephant, rhinoceros and buffalo) in the wild was another great experience. I got the opportunity to see the ugly and the glorious of a nation in political, social and spiritual transformation.

When I thought my South African journey and experience was done, it came alive even more vividly when I read Nelson Mandela's autobiography written while in the

Robben Island jail. All in all, the visit to South Africa, the opportunity to witness its beauty and the impact of the Truth and Reconciliation transformation, has been a source of personal blessing as I witnessed the public miracle of restorative justice.

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. The true test of devotion to freedom is just beginning." (*Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela).

Dirk Schouten studies journalism at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Rick Van Manen has been teaching for two years in South Korea.

Reflection/Environment

Invite grace in



CHRISTIAN HOME & SCHOOL

We can learn to spell grace "f-o-r-g-i-v-e."

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

A few days after my friend's teenaged daughter admitted in a small embarrassed voice that she had lost my umbrella, I met her at the mall.

Wide-eyed, she asked, "Do you hate me?"

"Hate you?" I exclaimed. "Of course I don't hate you!"

Her startling question assumed that I would not forgive, that I would not be kind. I was stunned that this young Christian didn't understand that grace had set me free to love those who wrong me, because God loves me even though I don't deserve it.

In *The Grace Awakening*, Charles Swindoll defines grace by quoting the Bible scholar Donald Barnhouse: "Love that goes upward is worship; love that goes outward is affection; love that stoops is grace." Swindoll adds, "To show grace is to extend favor or kindness to one who doesn't deserve it and can never earn it" (Word Publishing, 1990, pp 8-9).

God calls families to live in the context of grace. Not only are parents to stoop in grace to their children, but children to do so with their parents.

Grace-full living doesn't come naturally

However, grace-full living doesn't come naturally. Sometimes we rebel against extending grace to our children, spouses, or others. We resist forgiving again. The alternative to grace is bitterness, which bulges, billows and balloons until it becomes obese.

Daily, we face choices about extending grace. When we decide to adopt methods for inviting grace into our homes it indelibly marks our children's lives and helps shape their choices.

Living near the source of all grace — God himself — is key. Reading the Bible daily deepens our understanding of grace, and praying to be a conduit of God's mercy makes us available.

We can learn to spell grace "f-o-r-g-i-v-e." This involves forgiving our children readily and asking them to forgive us when we wrong them. At the same time it is important to teach them what it means. I asked my daughter Tamara, then six, to forgive me because I had hurt her feelings. She burst out crying, "I don't know what forgive means!"

'For' and 'give'

Simple illustrations work well with young children. For example, tell them that the word forgive can be split up into two words: 'for' and 'give'. When we forgive someone, we give something good for that person. What do we give?

We give love, instead of hate. Provide adolescents with a more in-depth description. You might refer them to *The Art of Forgiving* in which Lewis Smedes writes, "The three stages of the art of forgiving — restoring humanity to the person who wronged us, surrendering our right to get even, and beginning to bless the person we forgive — are the fundamentals of the healing process." (Moorings, 1996, pp. 11).

New math of grace

As well, teach your children what Philip Yancey, in *What's So Amazing About Grace?* calls "the new math of grace" (Zondervan Publishing House, 1997, pp. 59). As Yancey states, "Grace is not about finishing last or first; it is about not counting" (pp.61). Does that mean parents shouldn't hold their children accountable for their

Whom do you fear?

I closed my eyes to settle down for the night. But sleep would not come because in the distance wave after wave of jet engines roared heavily in the growing night. The sound was low and rumbling like thunder, yet far more predictable and less resonant than on a warm July night in Alberta. These were U.S. Navy aircraft moving in and out of Whidbey Island Naval Air Station north of Seattle. The young pilots were honing their skills in our defense.

This din has been a cost of living on the island for half a century. It is freedom's price and a noisy element of eternal vigilance. I grew up within eyesight, but mostly out of earshot of this military installation in western Washington. I seldom thought of nature as part of the cost of freedom. If airplanes must fly, then birds and people would make way for them. But this summer night the cost to the biophony of nature seemed high indeed. The sound of the jets reminded me that sometimes our fears can overwhelm us, and nature too.

Defending the Arctic

Canada and the US spend billions of dollars every year on national defense. It is money well spent in most cases. The dividend of Canadian peace keeping efforts around the world has been good will from many quarters. Now Canada faces a growing challenge to keep a presence in its north-east-most territories. The recent trend in global warming has opened up ice-free routes in the Arctic Ocean. It will take an expensive investment in sea and air power to project Canadian sovereignty in the North. The recent purchase of six used, but re-fitted British nuclear submarines will go some way to improving this situation. But more technical hardware will undoubtedly be needed.

It is ironic that global climate change has the consequence of exacerbating other environmental problems in the far north. In this case unmonitored shipping through a newly open Northwest Passage could spell environmental disaster. The Arctic Ocean is an intricate system that is complex both biologically and hydrologically. This physically harsh environment is especially sensitive to pollution and human induced change. So here the projection of military power will protect Canada's environmental interests as well as its political ones.

Missiles make a poor defense

But not all military expenditure is good for the environment. Recently in the U.S. a new missile

actions? Of course not. In *The Grace Awakening*, Swindoll points out how God disciplines his children: "When we do the things we should not, he may administer discipline, sometimes quite severely, but he never turns his back ... He deals with his own in grace ... beautiful, charming, unmerited favor" (pp. 12).

Grace and tough love

In Christian families, grace can hold hands with tough love. For example, when a squabbling scuffle ends as a bellowing battle and

your children push and shove each other until suddenly — crash! — your Mother's Day vase shatters on the floor. To teach them that their actions have consequences, you'll expect them to replace the vase by digging into their piggy banks or earning the money by doing chores. But you'll also forgive them. You won't make them pay repeatedly, in a figurative sense, by reminding them of what they did. When grace is absent, those disciplined have to pay the fine again and again. That's the old math, not the new math of grace!

Creation waits...

John Wood



defense system has been tested. Both U.S. Presidents, first Clinton and now Bush, have voiced approval for this complex and expensive defense option. It will, its designers say, protect the U.S. from nuclear attack by certain unnamed rogue states. They say that the price of this controversial system is worth the peace of mind it will bring. Yet, there are some things against which you simply cannot defend yourself. Or rather, sometimes the best defense is a great give-away.

Wealth and safety

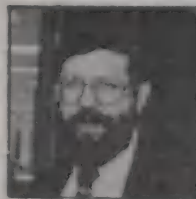
You would think that with the strongest economy on the planet and the most powerful military in history, generosity and peace of mind would come easily. Yet, strangely, all this power and wealth brings little generosity. A recent report by a Boston think tank indicates that Americans are the richest people in history. No surprises here. But they also give the least in foreign aid to those in need around the world. In fact, they give less today than in 1980, running last among major developed nations.

Why is it that when we have the most to give we find fear comes so easily and giving comes so hard? At the height of its economic and political power the US is preparing to launch a costly defense strategy with only an illusion of safety behind it. This seems like power gone awry.

Speaking to American Christians, Stanley Hauerwas has said recently that we must "face up to the fact that we live in an imperial power. We live in Rome." It is our great challenge as Christians, he says, "not to underwrite the presumptions of imperial power in the name of God." David knew that a warhorse is a vain hope for victory. Today we are in need of that lesson again. Do we win by the might of our military or by doing what is right?

I was wondering about that as I lay in the dark listening to the engines roar. It is time to turn over again in our mind's eye what it means to fear the

Lord. A strong defense is necessary, but real safety lies in serving others and not our fears.



John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

Speak the sweet words of grace. They contain no sarcasm, cynicism, scorn, mockery, or ridicule. Instead praise people, speak the truth in love, and critique in order to build up and not to destroy.

Laugh often with your children and spouse. Laugh at yourself and your mistakes. A home that resounds with kind laughter is filled with grace.

As we embrace grace, we empower our children to be grace-givers today and in their futures.

Cross-border broodings/News

One in every crowd

Ty Hofman

Cobi and I enjoyed a beautiful and inspiring concert recently featuring the Calvin College Capella Choir. It was amazing how masterfully the conductor directed the choir through a program of choice advent music. At the end of each section the audience expressed its appreciation with hearty applause. But as the final crescendo sounded from the choir, the applause burst forth as a clear reflection of the appreciation of the hearers. The conductor bowed to acknowledge it.

Waiting for an ovation

As I sat there, I wondered just how long it would take for someone to rise to begin the standing ovation which the choir may well have deserved. Sure enough, someone near the front rose from her seat and almost as on command the rest of the audience also began to arise. As usual I was one of the last to get up, not because I am stingy with my praise but there is a certain inertia within me that resists falling in line. (Maybe I should try going first once.) And, on many occasions, I just question whether the performance really

merits it. I'm just a bit slow in drawing that conclusion.

A vote of encouragement

At other times, the standing ovation can mean nothing more than a vote of encouragement for a "C" effort. I have witnessed situations in which the performer was fully aware of having botched it up and was embarrassed at receiving such an ovation. And most of the audience felt the same way. But we followed suit, like sheep being led to slaughter by a trained Judas goat, to do what we knew we really shouldn't be doing. And it meant that from that audience, a standing applause was totally meaningless. There is one very gifted conductor in Grand Rapids who has commented that in this town it is much too easy to get a standing ovation.

What this may really mean is that there is that one person who has taken it upon herself or himself to be in charge. If he didn't rise maybe someone else might, and he wouldn't want to miss out on being the one. Or maybe no one would and he would be sitting in utter frustration not having taken advantage of the situation. So up he

comes. It must give that person a feeling of superiority and power to be able so to command hundreds, yea, even thousands of people. You begin to wonder whether someone is paying undercover money to create the proper ambience in the place. Or maybe it's a way of making sure everyone in the place sees that he is indeed a great connoisseur of fine music.

The 'Judas goat'

Early in December we went to hear The Messiah performed in DeVos Hall. I must agree that it was a superb performance, but whereas the "Judas goat" usually waits an appropriate length of time before arising, this one literally jumped up within the first five seconds of the applause. I suspect that he did it in order to be seen for he was wearing a Dutch fisherman's cap, which he wore through the whole performance. We've been forced to get used to young uncouths wearing baseball caps, backward even in stylish places, but an old coot with a Dutch cap in The Messiah tells its own story. He needed to be seen. And sure enough, all who sat behind him, which was about 80 per cent of the crowd, did see him and followed almost instantaneously.

Then there is also the klutz who breaks into applause as the orchestra pauses before having reached the end of a piece. He always gets a

few to support him as the conductor brings down the baton to continue playing the score to the end. At that point I feel myself sinking a bit lower in my seat.

We in the U.S. haven't escaped this problem in church either. Of course, you good Reformed people in Canada have no such problem; you have better church manners and have not yet been corrupted by this aspect of modernity. I'm referring, of course, to the applause in the worship service. We may have picked it up from Robert Schuller's *Hour of Power* which specializes in good entertainment and every aspect of the service is enthusiastically applauded. It is often a very good show put on by a real showman. Whatever.

Applause in Reformed worship

But we also at times have applause in our Reformed worship. Not by design, or by permission. It just pops up now and then. When it comes, it usually has little to do with quality of performance. At

times it is obviously for encouragement, like when the little tykes render their action songs and cheer the hearts of all present, especially gramps and grammy. And they are so cute. When I was still conducting services, I would often lead in an ovation of gratitude.

But with the "special music" it is quite another story. Particularly when it's special music of the imported variety. There are those worshipers who just can't settle for a word of appreciation and thanks for the liturgist. They insist that there should be applause. Even when the quality is so marginal one wonders how the singer has come to the conclusion that he or she has a gift to offer. Then I ask, Why the applause? And I've concluded it is because of that one person, and there is one in every crowd, all on his/her own, who has determined to go for it. And with that first clap, everyone else just seems to fall in line. I ask myself why don't we just let that person carry the whole load all alone next time?

Could it be that every church should appoint an applause "meester" who would determine whether an ovation is due and just when it should begin? He, preferably, should receive special training and instruction from the consistory and should sit in full view of the congregation so that we could all come in on cue and make our applause really God glorifying!

Or maybe we should just worship?



To lead or to resist? Or merely caught napping?

HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

Colson and Dobson at Vatican conference

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado (Religion Today) — Evangelical leaders James Dobson and Chuck Colson took part in a conference at the Vatican last month. They joined business executives, Catholic politicians, lawyers, and scholars Nov. 27-29 discussing family issues. Dobson, president of Focus on the Family, and Colson, president of Prison Fellowship, also had a brief meeting with the pope, according to *The Gazette* of Colorado Springs.

"Part of the thing is to get over the hump of knowing each other," said Robert Sirico, a Catholic

priest who is president of the Acton Institute, a conservative think-tank based in Grand Rapids, Mich.

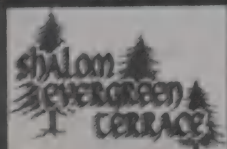
Dobson said that he has theological differences with the Catholic Church, but "when it comes to the family, there is far more agreement than disagreement, and with regard to moral issues from abortion to premarital sex, safe-sex ideology, and homosexuality, I find more in common with Catholics than with some of my evangelical brothers and sisters."



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Tymen Hofman retired in Grand Rapids, Mich., from

where he peers longingly over the border. He has not yet submitted his application for Applausemeester at Neland Avenue CRC.



News

Role of churches grows in global battle against HIV/AIDS

(Newsroom) — Amid reports of continuing catastrophe, many churches and faith-based groups are recognizing the importance of their role in the global fight against HIV/AIDS.

"We have a mandate to care for those who are ill, to care for our brothers and sisters whoever or wherever they might be," said Betty Gittens, executive secretary for health and welfare ministries of the United Methodist Church in the United States. "The church has the ability, especially in Africa, to reach an awful lot of people, and the reason is that the church is one of the few groups that folks trust in society right now."

Religious groups influence changes in behavior

Religious groups are among those who can be especially effective in battling HIV/AIDS because of their ability to influence changes in behavior, Mark Malloch Brown, administrator of the United Nations Development Program, said in a statement observing World AIDS Day on December 1.

"AIDS is such a formidable challenge in large part because of the difficulty of transforming societal, cultural, and gender norms and creating open dialogue about sex, empowerment of women, and the recognition of the role of men in responding to the epidemic," Brown said. "No government decree or planning document can do this. It requires a broad-based national effort involving communities, churches, women's groups, trade unions, and all types of organizations on the front line of AIDS prevention."

An estimated 5.3 million people worldwide were newly infected with HIV this year, according to "AIDS Epidemic Update: December 2000," released on Tuesday by the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO). That brings the estimated number of people living with HIV or AIDS to 36.1 million, up from 34.3 million last year. Approximately 21.8 million people have died from AIDS since the epidemic started.

Sub-Saharan the worst

The numbers are worst in sub-Saharan Africa, where an estimated 3.8 million people became infected with HIV this year, bringing the total number of people living with HIV or AIDS in the region to 25.3 million, up nearly one million from last year's figure. However, the number of new infections was down 200,000 from



REUTERS/GEORGE MULALA

Children orphaned by the AIDS virus line up to sing protest songs against high prices of drugs for AIDS-related illnesses, in the slum of Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya, last November 25.

1999. At the same time, 2.4 million people died in Africa of AIDS this year, up from 2.2 million in 1999, according to the report.

The report says the fall or stabilization of new infections may be due to effective prevention programs in countries such as Uganda and relatively fewer people likely to become infected, especially in countries where one out of four people have the HIV virus.

The role men play

World AIDS Day this year focuses on the role men play in the spread — and control — of the disease.

"As fathers, grandfathers, brothers, sons, friends, husbands, and partners, men determine the shape of the epidemic," Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, director-general of the World Health Organization, said in a prepared statement. "The campaign recognizes that men could have the greatest impact on the speed with which the epidemic subsides. Men are also well positioned to address the consequences of HIV infection and to ensure adequate care for those who are affected."

Sometimes, members of the faith community are oblivious to problems unless they are affected directly, and some blame the victims, Dr. Allan Handysides, health director for the Adventist World Church, told Newsroom. "So the first thing we feel in the health ministries in the church is to bring an awareness to church members that this is not just a problem far away, it could be affecting somebody in the next pew to them," he said.

In October, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's General Conference created an AIDS study committee to track the impact of HIV/AIDS on society and the

church and recommend more effective ways for the Adventist Church to respond to the worldwide epidemic. The 31-member committee includes Adventist health professionals and church leaders from Australia, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

"I think that within the faith community there needs to be a change in attitude — that it is a sort of self-inflicted problem, that they caused it upon themselves — to one of more supportive, nurturing, and caring," Handysides said. "And through education (we need) to try to rid some of the ignorance about HIV and AIDS. AIDS has a great deal to do with people's lifestyles and choices, but sometimes within faith communities there is a tendency to think they live on a higher plane and that is a mentality of being so heavenly they are no earthly good, or their heads are in the clouds."

Building relationships

People of faith can especially influence the behavior of young people, who are especially at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, he insisted. "We know that behavior is often a reflection of attitudes in their subculture or local group, and we feel that the faith community ought to be emphasizing connections, positive relationships, that we ought to be building relationships between young and old people," he said. "Because adverse behavior increases dramatically in situations where there are not those positive relationships."

Gittens said the United Methodist Church is developing focus papers related to HIV/AIDS for the African American, Native American, and Latino communities in the United States. The church also has done extensive work in Zimbabwe conducting educational and

prevention awareness programs, and is looking to expand its efforts with French-speaking and Portuguese-speaking partners elsewhere in Africa.

Dr. Harvey Elder, a specialist in infectious diseases and a member of the Adventist committee, said Christians have a responsibility to help AIDS sufferers. "No church that claims Christ can fail to respond to the AIDS crisis," he said. "We are called, as a church, to be a city of refuge, yet on the whole we are not. We need to develop a willingness to hold and to love, to be open to people, and to let the Gospel and the Holy Spirit work on their hearts."

What churches, agencies are doing

Following are examples of what churches and faith-based relief agencies are doing to combat HIV/AIDS:

- **Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA):** Operates AIDS awareness and education programs in numerous countries in Asia and Africa. In Malawi, for example, ADRA trains volunteers for drama and music presentations that communicate strategies to avoid the disease.

- **American Jewish World Service:** Supports community based organizations in Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Malawi that are engaged in HIV/AIDS prevention, home-based care, care of AIDS orphans, and income-generating activities.

- **Catholic Relief Services:** Supports a variety of programs in 40 countries ranging from volunteer training for community educators and counselors to medical care and programs for orphans and child-headed households.

- **Christian Children's Fund:** Supports AIDS orphans in Africa and Asia with food, health, education, counseling, and income-generating activities. CCF also conducts HIV/AIDS awareness programs in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Through CCF, donors can sponsor an AIDS orphan.

- **Christian Reformed World Relief Committee:** Works in AIDS prevention in Senegal with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, training church leaders and members to be prevention counselors in their communities.

- **Church World Service:** Provides assistance to partners in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America for programs that include health education and prevention; primary health care and treatment; sanitation and water development; and training for clergy, hospital chaplains, counselors, and

Christian health professionals on dealing with HIV infections.

Supplying dairy cows

- **Heifer Project International:** Works with a prostitutes rehabilitation program in Zimbabwe, with an AIDS orphanage in Kenya, and supplies a dairy cow to families who have adopted AIDS orphans.

- **Islamic American Relief Agency:** In Kenya, supports an AIDS awareness program, health care, and programs for AIDS orphans.

- **Lutheran World Relief:** Operates AIDS awareness and prevention programs, plus care and training for AIDS orphans and minors in East and West Africa and Southern Asia. In Kenya, AIDS education and community-based treatment is built into local health care and community empowerment programs. In Uganda, LWR helps a church center provide long-term care and vocational training for AIDS orphans and minors. In India, 73 villages receive education and are creating a plan to combat HIV/AIDS.

- **MAP International:** Works to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa and Latin America by actively engaging neighborhood churches and schools in culturally appropriate and locally sustainable HIV/AIDS education, prevention, and family support programs in these communities. MAP also provides medications for infections associated with AIDS.

- **Salvation Army:** Operates a variety of programs in more than 30 countries around the world. Many programs support people with HIV/AIDS and their families, including income-generation projects.

- **World Relief:** Helps churches in Rwanda, Malawi, and Mozambique conduct programs to prevent the spread of the disease and to care for the sick, the dying, and the orphaned. World Relief is developing biblically based AIDS prevention curriculum and pastoral counseling curriculum, and training church leaders and volunteers.

- **World Vision:** Conducts education and prevention projects and helps people living with AIDS, as well as AIDS orphans and their foster families in 10 countries. Among the agency's projects are assistance to AIDS orphans in Uganda, AIDS education for prostitutes and their truck-driver clients in Zambia, a Kids Club for children with HIV/AIDS in Romania, and a support group for people living with AIDS in Cambodia.

News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

WELL, NOW THAT THE presidential struggle is settled, we can let it rest for the time being. I have an idea that it will come up again to haunt us. We can, for now, also forget that five U.S. supreme court judges appointed by a father's party, ruled on a matter involving an eldest son, who, thanks to his younger brother, became president. Had this happened in a UN-supervised election in say, Africa, the international community would have severely condemned it.

It reminds me of my school days when I had to learn a Latin saying: *Not licet bovi, quod licet Jovi*, which exactly translated means: What a cow cannot do, is allowed for Jupiter, or more loosely paraphrased to mean: The gods live by different standards than the lower ranks. We will also relegate to the history books how the four minority judges told the U.S. nation that their colleagues had acted without legal principle or logic and in such a way "that may harm not just the court, but the nation." No wonder one placard read: "Hail to the Thief."

NOW IT'S TURNOVER time. All those defeated Democrats must be booted out of their cushy corners and replaced by respectable Republicans with, as their main qualification, a Texas drawl and an oil smell. Pay-off time, first for the oil companies who put this man in his place. Already appointed as White House Chief of Staff is Andrew Card,

formerly the auto industry's top anti-environmental lobbyist and an honorary general in the 'globe-is-not-warming' army, who will control access to the new president. He will guarantee that only true capitalists will see what will soon be the most televised man in the world, who has never set a foot outside the U.S., except on a flying visit to his Holy Land, the Oiliest of all Nations, Saudi Arabia, to pay homage to his real benefactors. Already new discussions of measures to counteract global warming have been suspended by the U.S., no doubt under pressure from the incoming team.

NOW BUSH IS ON his own. Perhaps he could beat around the bush in Texas, but now, just like Stockwell Day, he is in the big leagues, where every misstep is treated as a fall off the cliff. No honeymoon here: the race was too close and the politics too dirty. Papa Bush, who enjoyed only a single term in the White House, will, no doubt, lend paternal advice to his once wayward son. GW does believe in some sort of recycling: re-using the oldies from his old man — former secretary of Defence Dick Cheney and Colin Powell, former Chief of Staff, both stars in Desert Storm, Papa's great moment, which failed to oust Saddam. More about him later.

DICK CHENEY. HE'S GOT a problem: so far four heart attacks and one quadruple bypass. He quit smoking only after his third. Now

he is in a job where he cannot set his own pace, but where the pace sets him. If he did not have the discipline to quit smoking sooner, he certainly will not have the will-power to eat properly and exercise diligently. He is already 40 lbs. overweight and with a hectic schedule, expect him to have the dubious honor of being a vice-president who will die in office, which will present an interesting problem for the President.

And then there is Colin Powell, who is three things Mr. Bush is not — a war hero, worldly wise and beloved by African-Americans, of which he is the uncrowned king. When he was introduced and answered questions, he simply towered over his nominal boss, who will never be able to challenge him. For good or bad, foreign policy is now in the hands of a man whose sole occupation in life has been as a soldier, and whose entire outlook has been shaped by seeing matters in the light of defense and attack. Will he promote a 'fortress America' mentality?

BACK HOME. Parliament, recessed in October, will not return to Ottawa until the end of January — a four-month break — so the new MPs will have two months to find an apartment in Canada's capital city, where the vacancy rate is 0.1 per cent. With all the rich IT (Information Technology) people flocking into the city able to outbid them, our poorly paid — relatively speaking — parliamentarians, who have to maintain two residences, are to be pitied. Who knows, by the time they have found a place to stay, the winter session may be over. My advice to them is to hole up in an attic somewhere or find a long-lost relative to room with, and, if that fails, look for a mistress, just to have a roof over the head, of course.

In the unlikely event that the session takes longer, may I suggest a private members' bill to have an exclusive penthouse structure erected for the use of our Federal Members. After all, they can already eat practically free in the Commons Dining Room, so this would be the most logical next step. This would need unanimous consent, but since the opposition is almost exclusively from far away Alberta and B.C., this would pose no problem, especially since the Alliance member with the highest pay, our opposition leader, has a free dwelling at his disposal. So fair is fair.

There are definite signs that the economy is slowing down. Bush's first stop on his first official visit to

Washington, was to have an audience with Alan Greenspan. His father lost his second presidential bid and blamed Greenspan for not lowering interest rates soon enough. Now son Bush has a similar disagreement with the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, who opposes his proposed massive tax cuts and lower interest rates. Frankly, we've had a long run and with the law of gravity still in effect, what goes up must come down, so let's hope that the downturn is a slide and not an avalanche.

ALREADY FINANCIAL markets have been on an edge for weeks, and, as we enter the true millennial year, we do well to look back what has happened. The technical market, the so-called Nasdaq, is down by 45 per cent since March, while the broader US market is down by 10 per cent, making the year 2000 the first year since 1994 that share prices end the year lower than they started. People in the U.S.A. have seen almost \$2 trillion wiped off their wealth (that is \$2 with 12 zeros behind it), an average of \$8,000 for every household, and prices could fall further.

Mind you, in the last five years rising shares have boosted the wealth of American households by \$10 trillion. This illusory wealth has encouraged them to save nothing and even dip into their hard-dollar bank accounts, while borrowing so much money via unpaid balances on credit cards and loans from banks that the private sector debt is close to an all-time high. If the economy does slow down, and lay-offs come, then this debt has to be paid out of a diminished income, which will mean that more pieces of paper have to be sold, which will depress the stock market even more.

Then there is the current deficit, the amount by which imports exceed exports. Now with the U.S. dollar weakening — and the Euro and the Canadian dollar gaining in strength — this could lead to higher inflation, as more must be paid for imports, which, in turn, might lead to higher interest rates, which would depress the stock markets even more, which....

So, no wonder that Bush called on Greenspan for some expert advice. There is a definite chance that he will experience a recession during his term, which will allow Hillary to try her luck in the White House.

WITH ANOTHER YEAR ahead, predictions are in fashion. Since this column will see its light

in the new year, let me quote one document which makes a sweeping projection of what the world will look like in 2015. Its 70 pages are a result of an unusual collaboration between the (U.S.) National Intelligence Council, a sort of analytical think tank of senior intelligence officials that works alongside the C.I.A., and dozens of outside scientific, diplomatic and corporate experts. In terms of global resources, this important analysis concludes that by 2015 people will be lacking sufficient water, and that efforts to desalt sea water or develop more genetically modified crops will not substantially help.

It also projects that the spread of information and disease will increasingly affect the national security of the United States. It thinks that Russia will continue to become weaker, economically, militarily and socially, while China will be faced by political, economic and social pressures that will increasingly challenge the regime's legitimacy, and perhaps its survival. And Israel 'at best' will conclude a 'cold peace' with its adversaries.

IT ALSO PAINTS ONE possible scenario for strategically important countries like Iran and Nigeria and even allies like Israel, which all could fall victim to internal religious or ethnic divisions, leading to great international tensions. It also poses the possibility that China, India and Russia will form a de facto geo-strategic alliance in an attempt to counterbalance U.S. and Western influence.

Bush was given an advance copy (all 70 pages). The U.S. Intelligence officials hope that he will read it, as they are genuinely concerned that the Bush national security team will fail to look beyond its own borders and will only pursue what it sees as its own immediate interests, such as free trade and easy access to the world's oil supplies, the very reason why Father Bush initiated Desert Storm. Saddam Hussein is experiencing *deja vu* all over again. Now that "the son" has gained the White House, and other familiar faces are back, Saddam has every reason to take revenge; he has a long memory and a score to settle. As a new era begins, the new Bush administration will be tested by events not at all anticipated. Let's pray they will be ready.

Bert Hielema enjoys the winter, the reason why he will never go South but gladly hibernates in Tweed, Ont.

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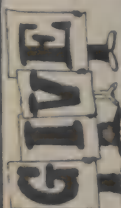
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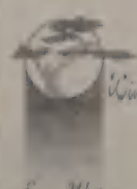
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(Psalm 106:1 (NIV)) Gerald & Pat, along with Alexandra, Jonathan and Aaron praise God for the safe arrival of yet another miracle, Justin Patrick Justin arrived on November 9, 2000, in Burlington, Ont., weighing 9 lbs. 1 oz. He is the fifteenth grandchild for Min & Jean Pool, and the ninth grandchild for John & Florence De Jong, all of Samia. We are truly blessed to be able to welcome Justin into our family. Address: 98 Pentland Rd., Waterdown, ON L0R 2H5</p>	<p>On March 10, 2000, amidst great rejoicing in heaven, the Lord welcomed home two of His own ALANA JOYCE DRYFOUT (October 1, 1981) and JAMES MARCEL FILIATRAULT (October 20, 1977) They died in a tragic accident on an icy bridge. Both Alana and James lived for God and loved to worship God with voice and instrument. Although we are comforted by the victory they have in Jesus and the joy they have in the home He prepared for them, our hearts will sadly miss them. Alana is the beloved daughter of: Tony & Connie Dryfouth Sister to: Ken & Lee-Anne Dryfouth Liza & Chris Davis Melanie & David Raakman and aunt to Branna Raakman Granddaughter of Ary & Janny Bovenberg. Loved by aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. James is the beloved son of: Gerald & Jean Filiatrault Brother to: Dana Gregory Grandson of Ruth Cuming Loved by aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends. Two young lives that shine like stars in the universe as they hold out the word of life. There is no lost potential, no purpose unfulfilled, only the perfect plan of God. "All the days ordained for me were written in Your Book before one of them came to be." (Psalm 139:16b)</p>	<p>GERDINA (GERDA) KOK Gerda passed away peacefully at her home, into the arms of her loving Savior, on Saturday, December 16, 2000, in her 68th year. She briefly battled with cancer. Gerda was the beloved wife of Dirk. Loving mother of: Richard & Donna Kok — St. Catharines Dave & Ticia Cook — Grimsby Rob & Peggy Cook — Jarvis Diane & Randy Heida — Cayuga Rod & Teresa Cook — Niagara-on-the-Lake Dear and fun-loving grandmother of 19 grandchildren: Melanie, Renee, Jennifer, Chad and Matthew Kok; Derek, Brian, Janine and Jeliesha Cook; Steven, James, Marie and Christopher Cook; Joshua, Nathan and Mitchell Heida; Alicia, Jacob and Julia Cook. Gerda was a loving daughter to the late Jan & Dirkje Suk, sister to the late Bill Suk, Jane and George Neutel. Survived by Jane Suk, Albert & Lynn Suk, Ralph & Jenny Suk, John & Susan Suk. She was also a cherished aunt to many nieces and nephews. Gerda had a special love for her children and grandchildren. She was an active member of Trinity Christian Reformed Church and a lifetime member of the Trinity CRC Ladies Circle Bible Study (Psalm 28:7). Funeral service was held on December 19, 2000. Donations can be made to the above mentioned Bible Study group or the Association for Christian Education of St. Catharines. Correspondence address: D. Kok, 190 First St., RR 3, St. Catharines, ON L2R 6P9</p>	<p>DCA Travel & Cruise 1-800-667-2525 TORONTO 416-224-5211 BRADFORD 905-776-6783 Emergency Service Available Visit us @ www.dca-travel.com ON SALE: KLM, A. C., Canada 3000 MARTINAIR... DIRECT</p>
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	<p>Thank You EISING: Trudy & Ralph Eising want to thank all their relatives and friends for the flowers, cards and good wishes for the occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary, on November 15, 2000. 507-54 Fittons Rd. W, Orillia, ON L3V 3T9</p>			<p>Job Opportunity MAPLE  Estimator Project Manager is a well-established design/build and heavy civil construction company with offices across Canada requires: Estimator- with 5 years design/build experience for our buildings division. Project Manager- with industrial building maintenance experience and architectural/civil background for our small projects division. Send resumes to raye@maple.ca or fax: 905-457-2498</p>
	<p>For Sale Used Baldwin 640 2-Manual Church Organ complete with 5- external speakers and amplifiers. By sealed bid, to be received on or before March 5, 2001. Att. Mr. D. Schaafsma, 85 Coulter Ave., St. Thomas, ON N5R 5A5. Organ can be viewed in present working condition at First Christian Reformed Church, 320 Elm St., St. Thomas. For more information and/or viewing appointment call 519-631-8859 or 519-631-7186</p>	<p>Church News Christian Reformed Church The spring meeting of Classis Eastern Canada will be held, D.V., on Friday, March 2 and 3, 2001, in the Ottawa-Calvin CRC in Nepean, Ont. Please send all materials for the printed agenda to the stated clerk before January 10, 2001. James Kooistra, Stated Clerk.</p>	<p>Job Opportunity If you are a compass, we have seventy young people seeking direction. Immanuel CRC of Brampton, Ont. is seeking a YOUTH DIRECTOR dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the existing programs of this well-established youth group. Church and area profiles available upon request. Please send resumes to Immanuelyouthdirector@hotmail.com or mail to: Immanuel CRC, 63 Church St. E., Brampton, ON L6V 1G1 Att. Youth Director Calling Committee.</p>	

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

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Generalist; macro-practice background; public policy, and/or research

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Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dordt College

498 4th Avenue NE

Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496

E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu

Web site:

www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Miscellaneous

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Home Missions Regional Co-Director Christian Reformed Church in North America

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) is seeking applicants for the position of

HOME MISSIONS REGIONAL CO-DIRECTOR

for central and Eastern Canada. Responsibilities include new church development leadership in the region, campus ministry support, and collaboration of ministry with Home Missions Regional Co-Director for established church development. In addition, this position may entail representation on various ministry teams for Home Missions at the CRC offices in Canada and U.S. The regional co-director will have an appropriate educational and professional background, experience in church-related ministries, and management experience in Christian not-for-profit organizations and organizational leadership skills are preferred qualifications. Membership in the Christian Reformed Church is required.

To confidentially apply for this position or receive a position description, please submit by **February 15, 2001** a copy of your resume and a letter stating your interest to:

Director of Personal

3475 Mainway, PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1

Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8 Canada

Telephone: 616-224-5881/ Fax: 616-224-5896

Email: colemann@crcna.org



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Redeemer University College
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Responsibility will be given for administering the Planned Giving Program and providing professional advice on matters concerning deferred gifts.

Qualifications: Post-secondary education and familiarity with planned giving *or* work experience in related areas of law, trust administration, or finance, is preferred. Knowledge of the traditional support community is essential. Effective Jan/Feb. 2001.

Please direct application materials and inquiries to:

Human Resources Director, Redeemer University College

777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4.

Tel: 905-648-2131 x4230. FAX: 905-648-2134;

email: jvgeest@redeemer.on.ca.

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Church News

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Contact Anne

905-386-6519

Wenda

905-386-6448

or E-mail:

vantuyt@vaxxine.com

Miscellaneous



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CRC

R. Vander Ploeg, Sec./Treas.

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Classifieds

Job Opportunities



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Ph. 905-643-2460 Fax 643-5875

Smithville Covenant
Christian School
6470 Regional Rd. #14
SMITHVILLE, ON L0R 2A0
Ph. 905-957-7796 Fax 957-7794

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Niagara Association for Christian Education was established in 1999 and serves over 430 students enrolled in grades K to 8 at two campuses in the Niagara region: Fruitland John Knox Memorial Christian School and the Smithville Covenant Christian School.

We are seeking a visionary Executive Director to administer the operation of our two campuses under the direction of the board. The successful candidate will lead an administrative team of two part-time principals. We are committed to operating under a Policy Governance model to be implemented in August 2001.

Responsibilities of our new Executive Director will include administration, curriculum development and public relations. Experience in elementary education and school administration is required, as well as managerial and leadership skills. A personal commitment to our mission statement, "Living for Jesus, Learning for Life, Serving with Gladness" is vital.

Applicants should include with their resume, information demonstrating how their skills and experience correspond to the qualifications for this position. Please send responses before **January 26, 2001** to:

Executive Director Search Committee
c/o Mr. Henry Zantingh, Board Chairperson
R.R.2,

Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
905-957-3438

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Miscellaneous

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PHASE 2

at our

Open House on Sat. January 20, 2001

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Tollendale Village is a planned Christian Retirement Community located on 14 acres of prime residential land adjacent to an extensive City owned natural park and close numerous to other recreational facilities. It will ultimately contain 300 Independent Living apartments, 20 semi-detached garden units and a 100 bed Extended Care facility, as well as a large number of amenities. The first phase of 86 units was completed in the Spring of 2000 and is now fully occupied.

Phase 2 consists of another 66 unit apartment building, and reservations are now being accepted. This Phase which is approximately 70% reserved is now under construction and scheduled for occupancy in the late Fall of 2001.

Information, guided tours of Phase 1 and an opportunity to reserve one of the remaining units in Phase 2 will be available. Refreshments will also be served.

If you or any of your family members are interested in knowing more about Tollendale Village, come and visit us at the Open House to obtain a complete package of information as to how you might become a part of this exciting and vibrant Christian Retirement Community. If you are unable to come to the Open House, you can reach us at any time by contacting:

Mr Sid Tjeerdsma, Executive Director
271 Tollendal Mill Road
Barrie ON,
L4N 7S6
Tel: 705-722-0469



Teachers

REXDALE, ONT.:

Timothy Christian School in Rexdale, Ontario (a suburb of Toronto), is looking for a **Grade 7 teacher** to fill a Parental Leave from **mid-March to the end of May, 2001**. Computer skills would be an asset. For more information, please contact the principal:

Trudy Jager
28 Elmhurst Dr., Rexdale ON
M9W 2J5
Phone: 416-741-5770

BRESLAU, Ont.

Woodland Christian High School has a definite one year opening in **History and English** for the 2001 - 2002 school year. Due to anticipated growth there may be openings in other teaching areas as well. Inquires from teachers of Mathematics and Science are especially encouraged. The ability to coach team sports will be a definite asset. Please direct applications and inquiries to:

Gary Van Arragon, Principal
Woodland Christian High School
R.R.#1, Breslau, Ontario,
N0B 1M0
519-648-2114
Fax: 519-648-3402
E-Mail: office@woodland.on.ca

THE NIAGARA ASSOCIATION FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

operating John Knox Memorial Christian School in Fruitland and Covenant Christian School in Smithville is seeking applicants for a 75% **Music position** beginning February 1, 2001. This position includes teaching music in Grades 4 through 8 at both sites. Experience in developing and implementing our Band program would be an asset. Send inquires or letters of application by **January 15** to:

Mr. Sid Bakker,
Covenant Christian School,
6470 Regional Rd.#14,
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
905-957-7796



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Job Opportunity

Classis Chatham Youth Ministry Committee has an opening for a half-time (20 hours/week)

CLASSICAL YOUTH COORDINATOR

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Ron Hosmar, 1281 Exmouth St. Sarnia, Ontario, N7S 1W9
519-337-6485 Office
519-337-3008 Fax
(email)ronscrcy@ebtech.net

Saskatoon Society for Christian Education,

Saskatoon, SK.,

seeks a full-time

PRINCIPAL

beginning August 2001. We are searching for a leader who has wisdom and deep faith, who loves the Lord, and has a passion for and a commitment to Christian Education. The applicant will have completed or show promise of completing a post-graduate program in Education.

Saskatoon Christian School is a growing school with 130 students from K-9. Our society has a strong inter-denominational flavour and presently is privileged to have an associate relationship with the Saskatoon Public School Board. Please direct all inquires, resume, statement of faith and philosophy of education (e-mail preferred) to:

Saskatoon Christian School

Attn: Carolyn Van Ee

2410 Haultain Avenue

Saskatoon, SK S7J 1R3

e-mail: hcvanee@sk.sympatico.ca

Ph: 306-384-0208

Fax: 306-978-1859

Application deadline: January 31, 2001



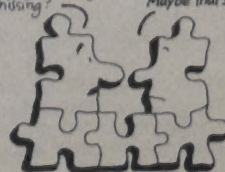
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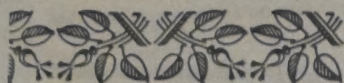
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Events/Classifieds

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- Jan. 26 and 27 Pre-marriage seminar – at First Christian Reformed Church, Guelph. For information or to register, call 519-822-7720
- Mar. 23-25 East CRC of Strathroy, Ont. 50th Anniversary Celebration weekend. Dinner Fri. evening; Sat. Open House and Evening Program; Sun. special worship services. Call Rie VanSteege for dinner reservations or more info 519-245-6785 or e-mail: secretary@eastcrc.org.



The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools invites applications for the position of:

Director of Development:

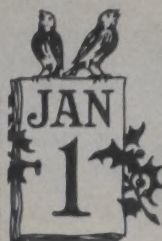
This senior position is responsible for designing and implementing fundraising programs to sustain the development of Christian curriculum in Canada.

Additional responsibilities include promotion advocacy and communications as well as curriculum design.

The successful candidate will have vision for Christian education, a broad range of education experience in Alliance schools and a working knowledge of finances and fundraising.

Inquiries and/or Resumé should be sent to:

Dr. Adrian Guldemand, Executive Director
Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools
617 Garner Rd. E., Ancaster ON L9G 3K9
Fax: 905-648-2110 or email: adriang@oacs.org



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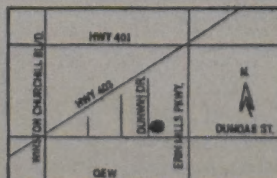
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News

Amnesty International runs campaign against torture

Alan Doerksen

VANIER, Ont. — Amnesty International has launched a campaign against torture, and is encouraging churches and concerned individuals to become actively involved in its plan of action to stop torture completely.

Recently, Amnesty's Canadian office sent campaign action kits to members of its Religious Action Network, urging them to raise awareness in places of worship and schools about torture, and to take direct, strategic action to pressure governments to implement reforms necessary to prevent torture.

Serious international problem

Torture remains a serious international problem according to Amnesty, which cites 150 recent incidents of torture and gives some graphic examples in its campaign kit. "Yet the fact that these crimes are so pervasive in the modern world does not mean that torture is inevitable," writes Amnesty. "International human rights law clearly prohibits torture under any circumstance. Most of the world's governments have already agreed to human rights frameworks which, if fully and consistently implemented, would make a significant difference in exposing torture, protecting the most vulnerable, bringing the torturers to justice, and, ultimately, preventing torture."

According to Amnesty, "This campaign is an opportunity to oppose torture in a more high profile way and to engage a much larger public in this work. In today's global economy, few governments are isolated from world opinion.

Public criticism can threaten trade deals and deter investment.... Working together, we can send a clear message to the world's governments. It's time to stop torture."

Infliction of severe harm

Amnesty defines torture as "the intentional infliction of severe physical or mental harm. It's also an exercise of power meant to coerce, intimidate, degrade or dehumanize."

The campaigns goals are:

- to build a grassroots movement to stop torture. Amnesty wants to engage as many individuals and agencies as possible to build a movement that can demonstrate clear public concern over torture and exert powerful pressure for change.

- to focus strategic pressure on key governments. The campaign is focusing on five countries or regions where there are serious torture issues, and also real opportunities for Canadians to have their voices heard.

- to celebrate and strengthen effective ongoing work against torture — by Amnesty and other agencies.

Action that Amnesty recommends people can take to oppose torture includes plenty of letter-writing, an approach Amnesty has focused on during its 40 years of existence. Amnesty also urges people to talk to others about the campaign against torture, contact the media, and make presentations to churches, schools and service clubs.

The five regions Amnesty is focusing its campaign on are: Mexico, Sudan, India and Pakistan, the Middle East, and the European

Union. Amnesty's concern about Sudan is that "widespread rape and other acts of torture and cruelty have been committed against civilians in the context of an ongoing armed struggle.... We will focus on the safety of civilians during conflict and their rehabilitation after suffering human rights abuses."

Having the European Union on the list may come as a surprise. But Amnesty explains, "There are widespread reports of violence and cruelty toward recent immigrants in police custody throughout Europe." To address this, Amnesty encourages its supporters to write directly to European governments and their representatives in Canada.

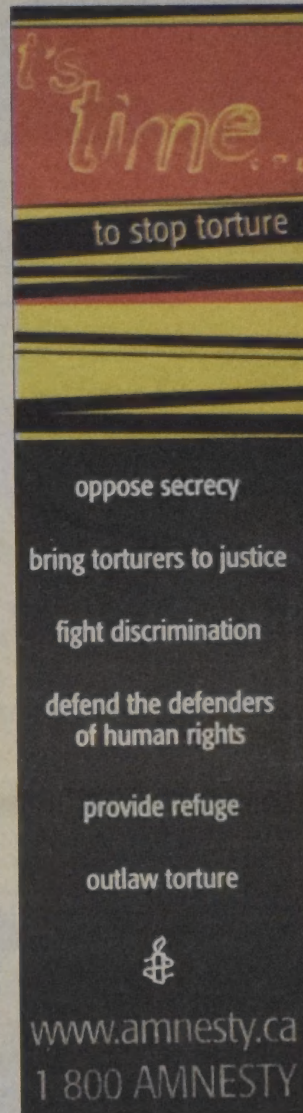
An end to secrecy

Besides its goal of outlawing torture worldwide, Amnesty wants to end secrecy about torture, which can allow it to flourish. Amnesty wants places of detention scrutinized by independent observers, to ensure that torture does not continue. Amnesty also insists that torturers should be brought to justice and all allegations of torture must be investigated.

Amnesty also calls for an end to discrimination against social groups, because such prejudices can send the message that it's alright to torture certain people. Human rights activists who speak against torture need to be supported by people speaking out when they are threatened. And lastly, Amnesty urges that people who flee their communities to escape torture should have access to safe shelters and the right to asylum abroad.

Amnesty's campaign against torture was launched October 16, and continues until October 2001. December 4 to 11 was the first of two "weeks of action," focusing on the theme "Break the Silence." Amnesty had urged supporters to break the silence on Human Rights Day (Dec. 10) with one minute of noise.

Amnesty's second week of



A poster for Amnesty's campaign against torture.

action will be April 2 to 8, 2001, and will focus on the theme "Safe from Torture." Amnesty suggests that concerned people arrange for a public space to be dedicated to the work of human rights defenders during that week.

Kenyan bishop calls on widows to oppose 'wife inheritance'

NAIROBI, Kenya (ENI) — An Anglican bishop in west Kenya has called for women belonging to his church to reject "joter," a traditional local practice by which widows become the spouse of another member of their husband's family. Joter — also known as wife inheritance — is traditional among the Luo people of Nyanza Province of western Kenya. The

Luo people are often polygamous, and several widows can be inherited by a single family member.

Another element of the tradition is the practice of holding a "cleansing" ritual in which the widow has sex with an outsider before being given to her brother-in-law or other family member.

News Digest

Church takes over bar

PINCKARD, Alabama (Religion Today) — A church has converted a topless bar into a centre for youth and the poor. Michael Senn, pastor of Kings Table Worship Center in rural Pinckard, Ala., said his congregation has leased the building where T.J.'s Annex was located, renaming it J.C.'s Annex, according to the *Birmingham News*. The church is expanding from its sanctuary across the street.

A gaudy sign that once read "Girls! Girls! Girls!" to beckon passers-by has been painted over, the newspaper reported.

Church members say prayer drove the dancers away. Senn said members had prayed that God would "dry up" the topless club's business, the *News* reported. The pastor said he never thought having a bar nearby was a problem. "What better place to build a church?"

Deja 2K

TORONTO — "Call it D2K — deja 2K," wrote *USA Today* recently. "Just when you thought it would be another thousand years before they dragged out that word 'millennium' again, it's back, splashed on boxes of gold and silver noisemakers at the party-goods store, and squeezed into the billing of New Year's Eve celebrations across the [U.S.]. In case you never left your Y2K bunker, Jan. 1, 2001 mark[ed] the beginning of the next millennium, ... the 'real' millennium."

Snack for a weapon

LONDON, England — A London robber was sentenced to four years in jail last month after holding up a store with a snack. Anthony Newton, 57, pretended a Twiglet bar was a weapon, the court in Exeter, England, was told. The court heard that Newton pushed the Twiglet into the cashier's ribs and told her to hand over the money, reports the *Globe and Mail*.

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